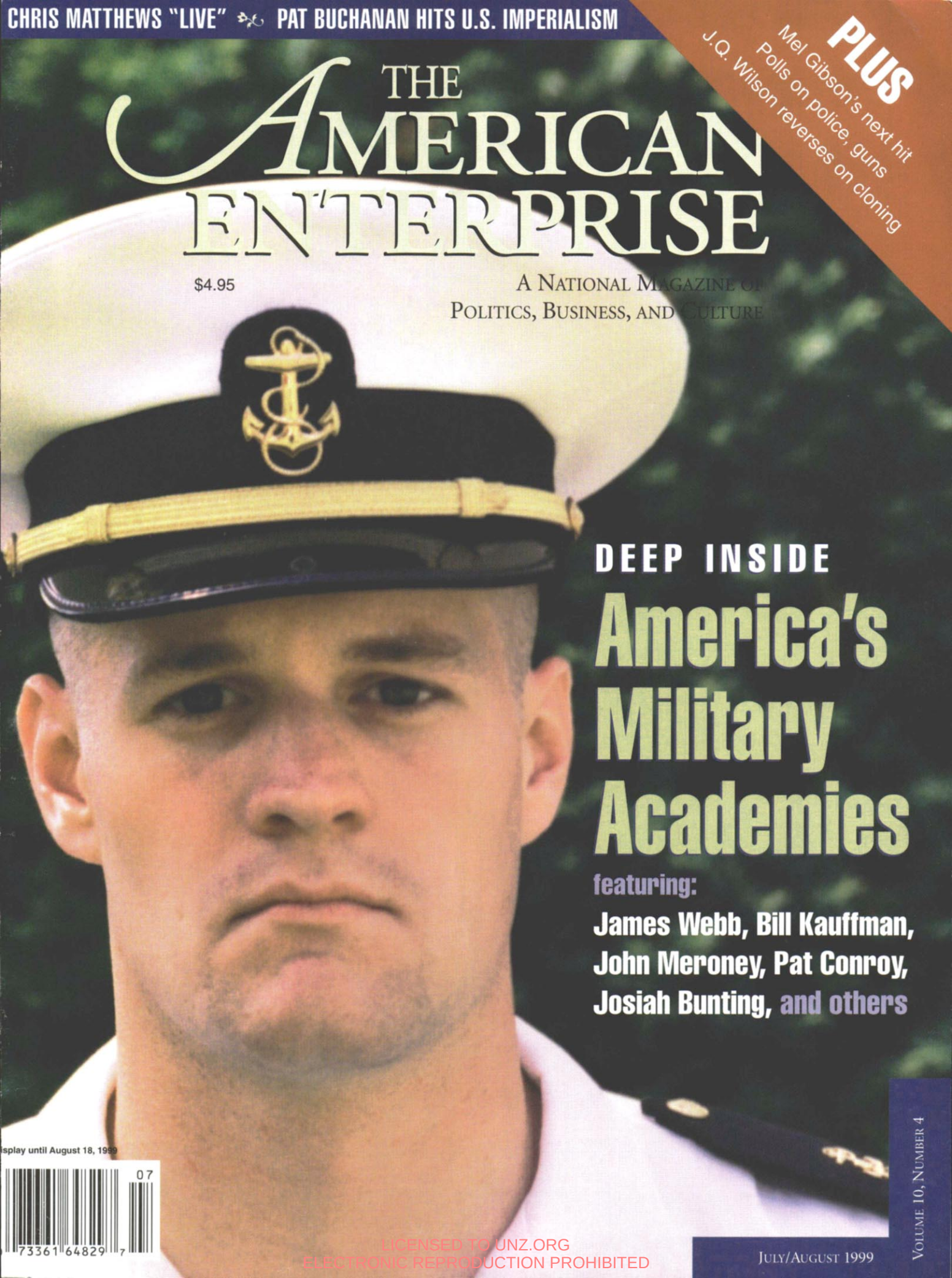
CHRIS MATTHEWS "LIVE" ❧ PAT BUCHANAN HITS U.S. IMPERIALISM

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

PLUS
Mel Gibson's next hit
Polls on police, guns
J.Q. Wilson reverses on cloning

$4.95

A National Magazine of
Politics, Business, and Culture



DEEP INSIDE
America's Military Academies

featuring:
James Webb, Bill Kauffman, John Meroney, Pat Conroy, Josiah Bunting, and others

Volume 10, Number 4
July/August 1999

isplay until August 18, 1999
07
73361 64829 7
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We make lives memorable.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We're Pfizer.

With our partners Eisai Co. Ltd., we introduced a medicine for a disease that devastates families...Alzheimer's. Last year, we spent over two billion dollars researching Alzheimer's and other major diseases. That's why we believe we'll introduce more new medicines for more diseases than anyone else. We're working hard to help families share memories and even create new ones. The people at Pfizer will never forget: the only thing incurable is our passion.

Pfizer

Life is our life's work.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

A National Magazine of Politics, Business, and Culture

July/August 1999 Vol. 10, No.4

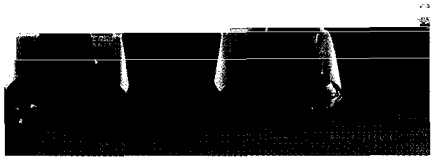
Phil Kamrass

4 BIRD'S EYE
Character factories.

8 SIDELIGHTS
Channel of the Apes. More ammo, please. Lee reviews Grant.

10 SCAN ◆ Short News and Commentary
Pat Buchanan calls for a republic, not an empire. Equal pay for equal work. Gen X saves. Unions vs. good schools. The culture wars turn deadly. Shaping a lean and mean military. One nuclear umbrella, please. Porn studies and incest flicks. *Viva* monolingual education!

18 "LIVE" WITH *TAE*
Hardballer *Chris Matthews* defends politics but rips into pols and pundits.



PAGE 24

24 THE WEST POINT STORY
Bill Kauffman
The long history of the U.S. Military Academy is a struggle of contending American ideals. Meet the heroes and goats; observe the ebb and flow of new ideas and changing conditions; understand how this hard and unforgiving institution grips its subjects and refuses to let them go, even unto the grave.

42 IS THE NAVAL ACADEMY OFF COURSE?
John Meroney
After a decade pockmarked by some traumatic lapses, graduates and other observers wonder whether the Naval Academy has lost her way. They want higher standards, stricter discipline, and more emphasis on training warriors rather than accommodating social fashions.

52 DEAR SUPE
James Webb
One of Annapolis's most famous sons reports, 35 years later, to the officer who grabbed him by the lapels and asked him if he was ready to grow up.

56 ALTERNATIVES TO THE ACADEMIES
John Bradford and *Eli Lehrer* report on the advantages and disadvantages of ROTC. *David A. Smith* admires the British approach: converting four-year academies into one-year military finishing schools.

60 "IT CHANGED MY LIFE"
Dave Geisler tells the story of a would-be delinquent turned by the Marines and The Citadel into an honorable man.
Pat Conroy explains why he's glad he went to The Citadel rather than Georgetown, Oxford, and Yale.

Cover photo of Midshipman William Wiley, Naval Academy class of 2000, next year's Brigade Commander. Photo courtesy of Wayne McCrea, U.S. Naval Academy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

64 MILITARY HIGH SCHOOLS MAKE A COMEBACK

Evan Gahr finds parents across the country singing the praises of military high schools.
Josiah Bunting III, who has more experience with military education than almost anyone in America, describes how it works.

68 WHY MEDICAL EXPENSES ARE OUT OF CONTROL

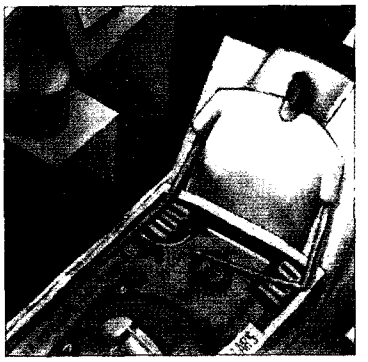
William C. Waters III
A second-generation doctor describes in a crisp fable how do-good government is making for bad medicine.

71 BIPARTISAN MEDICARE REFORM

Rep. Bill Thomas
A plan for escaping today's Medicare mess that's practical and popular, described by the key Congressman. Bill Clinton, please phone home.

72 A LONGER-TERM ALTERNATIVE

John Hood
In the long run, we'll have much better choices in medical care if we change the way government handles all entitlement programs. Here's a bold idea.



PAGE 68

74 IN REAL LIFE ◆ First-person America

- Mother *Jennifer Roback Morse* lauds one shopkeeper's effort to clean up the public square.
- Traveling businessman *Dale Anema* discovers farmers and ranchers can occupy the same land yet live in different universes.

76 SOCIAL SECURITY WATCH

If you think you have a "right" to your Social Security money, guess again.

77 HOLLYWOOD REPORT

Mel Gibson's next movie aims to marry *Braveheart* and *Saving Private Ryan*. And it's set in a time and place where movies almost never go.

78 FLASHBACK

Odd and poignant lives in West Point history.

80 BOOK TALK

- Jonah Goldberg—*All Too Human* by George Stephanopoulos
- Charles Euchner—*The Secret Lives of Citizens* by Thomas Geoghegan
- Walter S. Montano—*Alexander Hamilton & Aaron Burr* by Arnold Rogow
- George Marlin—*A History of New York City* by Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace
- Justin Raimondo—*The Roosevelt Myth* by John T. Flynn

85 THE DIGEST ◆ Summaries of Important Research

States' rights...plane facts...make your city smaller...you can be too careful... add Britain to NAFTA.

90 OPINION PULSE ◆ The Latest Survey Data

Confidence in the military. Spending on the military. When to deploy the military. Attitudes toward the police and toward gun ownership.

94 THE MAIL

James Q. Wilson changes his mind about cloning.
John Mueller debates *Deroy Murdock* on Social Security.

96 LAST GASP

PAGE 42

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

A NATIONAL MAGAZINE OF POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

JULY/AUGUST 1999 VOL. 10, NO. 4

PUBLISHER *CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH*
EDITOR IN CHIEF *KARL ZINSMEISTER*
SENIOR EDITOR *SCOTT WALTER*
ASSISTANT EDITOR *WALTER S. MONTANO*
ASSOCIATE EDITORS *BILL KAUFFMAN*
MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER
PHILIP LANGDON
ELLEN WILSON FIELDING
JOHN MERONEY
OPINION PULSE EDITOR *KARLYN H. BOWMAN*
ART DIRECTOR *DEANNE D. YETMAN*
GRAPHIC DESIGNER *JEANNE BERGER*
PROOFREADER *GAYLE YIOTIS*
BUSINESS MANAGER *CHRISTINE REYERSON COYLE*
INTERN *NOAH POLLAK*
CHIEF OF OPERATIONS *DAVID GERSON*

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS *EDWARD ERICSON, EVAN GAHR, BLAKE HURST, JOEL KOTKIN, JOSH LARSEN, ELI LEHRER, DEROY MURDOCK, RALPH REILAND, BEN STEIN, FREDERICK TURNER, RAY WISHER*

POSTMASTER: Send all subscription correspondence and address changes to The American Enterprise, P.O. Box 7144, Bensenville, IL 60106-7144. THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE (ISSN 1047-3572), published bimonthly by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Copyright © 1999, the American Enterprise Institute. All rights reserved.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
"The Mail," The American Enterprise,
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036,
or fax (202) 862-5867, or e-mail
TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com.

WEB PAGE
www.TheAmericanEnterprise.org

PRODUCTION AND BUSINESS OFFICE
The American Enterprise
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
(202) 862-5886.

OFFICE OF THE EDITOR IN CHIEF
The American Enterprise
23 Hurd Street, Cazenovia, NY 13035.
(315) 655-1033.

MANUSCRIPTS
The editors welcome article submissions.
We will not be responsible, though, for returning unsolicited manuscripts. Send to Senior Editor at Washington, D.C. address.

BACK ISSUES
Send $6 per copy to Production Office, above.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
New or Problems: (888) 295-9007. $28 one year.

Bird's Eye

KARL ZINSMEISTER

Soldiers of Virtue

The most serious question of our day is a simple one: How, in a soft, often amoral, and self-indulgent age does one transform everyday American boys and girls into strong, principled young men and women?

With a large minority of parents wolfishly absorbed in their own desires, an army of commercial seducers now peddling debased "entertainments" to kids, all forms of traditional social authority in tatters after four decades of carpet-bombing, and God locked in the closet by our cultural gatekeepers, maturing into an adult of high character is no easy process.

Even in America's "best" neighborhoods, Littleton has just reminded us, young Americans are being warped by today's bottomless nihilism. Not just throwaway kids but also some comfort-addled middle-class youths are crumpling in selfish and morally depraved ways. The ones who do navigate their way into a decent adulthood are turning out to be healthier, smarter, and more impressive than any previous generation in U.S. history. But the traps for those youths who stray have also become deeper, more numerous, and more dangerous.

The deepest craving, then, of today's parents, employers, and patriotic citizens is for beacons that can help fill young Americans with a sense of purpose and personal responsibility. How can we defeat cynicism, irresponsibility, and selfishness in modern kids? How can we encourage virtue and integrity?

There are of course many ways, with each having more or less applicability to particular young people. But for more than a year we at *TAE* have been intensively studying one method that shows unusual power to transform nice, narcissistic, uninspired teenagers into highly disciplined cavaliers devoted to something much greater than their own appetites. That method is military education.

"Military education" isn't the same thing in all times or places. It can vary in important ways from institution to institution, and across generations—as you'll see in this issue—becoming more or less effective depending upon how faithfully and energetically its basic precepts are applied. But good military education can do wonders—in particular for young males, who in shopping-mall America often drift into trouble for lack of hard boundaries, high challenges, and approved channels for their natural aggressive impulses.

Military education is not especially complicated. It is based on a few very clear, very settled, very stern principles. In a fuzzy, lazy, sold-out time, the military code is crisp, demanding, and uncompromised. In an era willing to sanction anything, good military education teaches young people to be intolerant: of disloyalty, half-heartedness, injustice, and cowardice. Many of the young Americans who enter military education today have never encountered such ideas before.

The military ethic is in many ways an antidote to the lolling libertinism of modern life. Whether this throwback code can retain its essential stiffness in the face of today's

WE'VE BEEN STUDYING A METHOD THAT SHOWS UNUSUAL POWER TO TRANSFORM NICE, NARCISSISTIC, UNINSPIRED TEENAGERS INTO HIGHLY DISCIPLINED CAVALIERS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN AN ERA WILLING TO SANCTION ANYTHING, GOOD MILITARY EDUCATION TEACHES YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INTOLERANT: OF DISLOYALTY, HALF-HEARTEDNESS, INJUSTICE, AND COWARDICE.

cultural breezes remains to be seen, but there are signs that a large and hungry market still exists for these ancient, time-tested verities. Anyone who has watched some purposeless Gen X child drift into Parris Island, only to march home as an honor-bound man and Marine (and that continues to happen every day in this country) can see firsthand that many young Americans are crying out for the clear limits and elevated ideals that martial life teaches.

Places like West Point and Annapolis now attract super-achievers who combine high intelligence with extraordinary leadership traits. In the latest class enrolled at our U.S. Military Academy the SAT scores are Ivy League caliber, one out of every five cadets was the president of his class or student body, and a stunning 61 percent were a varsity team captain.

Yet these men and women too must be transformed. They enter the academy gates stuffed with the same materialistic, pleasure-centered, egoistic ideas that fill their turn-of-the-century countrymen. Neither duty nor honor nor country are the first words on their lips as they lift their heads from their pillows during their final mornings of high school. Periodic Academy scandals (especially at Annapolis in recent years) demonstrate that even these most-controlled and talented of American offspring share in the modern vices. Re-forming them to a higher image is no easy task.

And, realistically, it will never be possible to convert all the children of Nintendo into dutiful knights. But I am here to report, as an eyewitness, that today's best variants of military education—as practiced in places like West Point and Annapolis, VMI and The Citadel, Fork Union and Valley Forge—are turning out some enormously impressive young men and women. The graduates of these places may be no more than a sliver of their generation, but after 12 months of interacting with them I cannot feel gloomy about the potential of modern American kids. It is crystal clear this generation is quite capable of being both good and great—if only their guardians and mentors will provide the necessary rules, inspiration, and lofty standards.

"Character is the Academy's concern...to which it has always given single-minded, almost fanatical devotion," wrote Dwight Eisenhower. That is still the case. The first thing General Daniel Christman, the current USMA Superintendent, told us when we sat down in his office on a breezy fall day was: "West Point is deeply, deeply involved with values education."

"These are the most idealistic kids I've ever taught in my life," says Louis Pojman, an accomplished ethicist recently lured onto the West Point faculty after teaching at places like Notre Dame, Berkeley, Ole Miss, and the University of Texas. "There's just no other place outside of religious schools where ethics is taken so seriously. The discipline and the integrity that we find here, the closest thing to it is at a place like Yeshiva, or Notre Dame, or Wheaton College. There's a kind of commitment that people have here."

"I wish my colleagues outside could have these students. They are tremendously teachable," says English professor Tim O'Brien, who likewise has lots of experience at civilian colleges with which to compare Annapolis life. "Midshipmen are eager, respectful, yet they question authority. They are very sensitive to the difference between effective leadership and raw power," he adds. USMA staff chaplain Scott McChrystal concurs: "I can't imagine an easier place to teach. The kids are so wholesome, solid, and earnest."

JOB OPENING

The American Enterprise is interviewing for a Production Assistant. This is an excellent opportunity for a hustling, detail-oriented, responsible person to break into journalism and the Washington, D.C. political scene.

The job involves managing relations with authors; article research; coordinating manuscript flows among editors, art director, and writers; coordinating interns; negotiating some contracts; proofreading; some editing; perhaps some short writing.

We need someone who is dogged and careful, a good communicator, who follows through on work. Good language skills, some familiarity with politics, and comfort with computers necessary. A high energy level and willingness to work long hours on deadline required. Entry-level D.C. pay. Interesting people and work. Please apply immediately to:

Scott Walter, The American Enterprise
1150 17th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036
phone (202) 862-5887 or fax (202) 862-5867
e-mail swalter@aei.org

MAY/JUNE DELIVERY PROBLEM?

Due to a mistake at our printer, some copies of *TAE*'s May/June issue were incompletely addressed and thus delayed or left undelivered. We apologize for the inconvenience.

If you are a subscriber and did not receive a copy of our last issue ("Whatever Happened to the Truth?"), please contact our business manager for a replacement copy:

Christine Coyle
phone (202) 862-5870
fax (202) 862-5867
e-mail ccoyle@aei.org

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

The American Enterprise takes an unconventional look at Fatherhood.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN SHOPPING-MALL AMERICA, MALES IN PARTICULAR OFTEN DRIFT INTO TROUBLE FOR LACK OF HARD BOUNDARIES, HIGH CHALLENGES, AND APPROVED CHANNELS FOR THEIR NATURAL AGGRESSIVE IMPULSES.

I asked many people whether the cadets and midshipmen just came in that way, or were made so through academy training. The consistent answer: Most of the kids arrive with solid skills and traditional values, but these get reinforced and raised to a much higher level by their training.

"It's a very effective system. The kids internalize it," says Pojman. "They come in already committed to a kind of moral way of life. They go out even more so. It's in their habits." Naval Academy midshipman Melissa Hawley answers, "I definitely think this place can make an average person into an exceptional leader."

Certainly there are limits on what can be done in four years with men and women who arrive with 18 years of reflexes already ingrained. "The stream will not permanently rise higher than the main source; and the main source of national power and national greatness is found in the average citizenship of the nation," warned Teddy Roosevelt. "I'm seeing kids who don't know right from wrong, who really need re-training," says Lieutenant Shane Baldino, a Seahawk helicopter pilot doing a tour at Annapolis as a company officer charged with close supervision of middie life.

During one reporting visit to Annapolis I asked some newly graduated mids headed off to flight school about the nasty drug/sex abuse/car theft scandal which had unfolded in the previous year. Surely, I suggested, there must be resentment among the Brigade toward the mids involved, who, despite their relatively small number, had managed to black the reputation of the entire Academy and many of their classmates. "Not really," I was surprised to be told. "I lived on the same floor with a couple of them, and we didn't make it into a big deal," came the answer. In other words, the mindless "nonjudgmentalism" that has corroded standards in so many other places also poses dangers along the banks of the Severn and the Hudson.

Given the late-twentieth-century raw material they work with, however, our academies are remarkably effective at turning out unusually ethical graduates. They are certainly not 100 percent free of cheating, drug-use, and other misbehavior, but in a typical year they come impressively close. "I've seen so much dishonesty, drunkenness, promiscuity, and general decadence during my years on various campuses. This place is really an exception," concludes Pojman. (He notes that West Point was ranked 300th—last!—on the latest *College Guide* ranking of party colleges.)

It's not just what the cadets and midshipmen don't do, it's also what they *do* do that sets them apart. Most will graduate without having cut a single class in their four years. Not one. Homework is done and handed in without excuses. Students come to classes prepared. Everyone—without exception—participates in sports and stays in shape. And manners are from another era, sometimes seemingly another planet. When a late-arriving reporter slipped unannounced into a full political science lecture, not one but four mids jumped up to surrender their seats, standing for the rest of the discussion. At the beginning of every class at the U.S. Military Academy cadets stand at attention and salute the instructor, civilian or military—a gesture that seems heartfelt and appreciated on both sides. (Something similar is done with less consistency at the Naval Academy.)

There is a remarkable breadth and depth of religious commitment at all of the academies, with an estimated majority of the men and women participating in Bible studies, prayer chapels, after-hours evangelical groups, and such. What's more, something of a religious revival seems to be sweeping West Point at least. An unexpected 300 cadets turned out for a Fellowship of Christian Athletes prayer breakfast, for example, during one of the weeks we visited.

And it's not just the students who are different. Of his mostly military faculty colleagues, one civilian professor with extensive prior teaching experience remarks, in a tone of lingering surprise: "I have never been in a faculty with more congenial people, more honest people, without the kind of vanity and big egos that you traditionally find in academics. There's just a lot of integrity in the system."

What, precisely, are the principles that military academies try to drum into their charges? The inscription above the doors of the Naval Academy chapel encapsulates the creed this way: *Non sibi sed patriae.* "Not for self, but for country."

One Marine officer who works with new privates in basic training describes the "unMarinelike values" he commonly has to purge from recruits as "self-indulgence, me first, I'm-going-to-do-what-I-want-to-do." Those would be dangerous traits in combat. As one observer of the academies has written:

> Any man entrusted with power, with weapons of destruction, must be taught that they are never for his own use; he must always be held accountable to others. It is not too far-fetched to say that the entering cadet's first summer at the Academy is obedience training. He must obey literally hundreds of orders, commands, and regulations every day. Anything but instant response brings swift and immediate reprisal.

Establishing this vital standard within military men and women without turning them into sycophants and puppets is a tricky process. Cadets must abide by billowing lists of rules and regulations, and many can seem petty and oppressive. Books and shoes must be lined up just so, windows can be opened only to specified points, corners must be turned squarely when walking, food can't be taken to rooms, uniform buttons must be aligned perfectly, and so on. Most decisions are made for mids and cadets—where they will go, what they will eat, how they will

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GIVEN THE LATE-TWENTIETH-CENTURY RAW MATERIAL THEY WORK WITH, OUR ACADEMIES ARE REMARKABLY EFFECTIVE AT TURNING OUT UNUSUALLY ETHICAL GRADUATES.

handle their money. Executed without care, this system can stunt personal responsibility and initiative rather than build hardy character. It can encourage apathy, cynicism, and bureaucracy rather than bold leadership. There is no easy way of managing this—academy leaders must constantly tinker and recalibrate the balance so as to discipline their charges without stifling them, stress and stretch without tyrannizing.

In recent years, new stumbling blocks have complicated the task of training up young men and women to do things "Not for self, but for country." Military writer Andrew Bacevich warns that

> soldierly virtue...has become an anachronism. It celebrates the group rather than the individual. It cherishes virtues such as self-sacrifice, self-denial, and physical courage that are increasingly alien to the larger culture. It clings to a warrior spirit that is deeply and perhaps irreducibly masculine. In short, orthodox notions of what it means to be a soldier clash head-on with the imperatives of political correctness.

Within present society, former Annapolis professor Major Edward Palm has noted, "service academies are cloisters. They exist to wean a select few away from the mores and values of mainstream America." Or as the current Superintendent of the Naval Academy, Vice Admiral John Ryan, put it when we interviewed him, "Annapolis is an *oasis* of honor, discipline, and integrity within our larger culture."

Some critics crab that it has to be unhealthy for military and civilian worlds to occupy different universes in this way. But the truth is, the American people have long admired—and utterly depended upon—the military's willingness and ability to maintain a separate, higher standard of behavior. In a remarkable speech delivered to a group of Naval Academy alumni in May, the current Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, General Charles Krulak, quoted something an earlier Commandant had told Krulak's father.

> Brute, why does America need a Marine Corps? The truth is, we don't. Everything the Marine Corps does could be replicated by the other services. America has a Marine Corps for one reason...because the grassroots of our country believes that Marines are downright good for the nation, that the Marines are masters of a form of unfailing alchemy which converts unoriented youths into proud, self-reliant, stable citizens into whose hands the nation's affairs may safely be entrusted. Should the people ever lose that conviction—as a result of our failure to meet their high, almost spiritual, standards—the Marine Corps will quickly disappear.

To which Commandant Krulak adds: "I am here to tell you that the same is true for the United States Naval Academy. We had better look hard at why Americans want one, and how we can bolster their support." And the very best way to do that, he suggests, is to make sure that every graduate is "a person of character, who has been taught and held to the highest, uncompromising standards of honor and conduct." There are still lots of young Americans who want to become such people, says Krulak. They are looking for structure, stiff challenges, camaraderie, and a kind of faith which makes them want to become better men and women.

Beyond their immediate function of training leaders of small combat units, our military academies serve to keep a vital flame alive. They provide four years of intense, nearly full-time immersion in the code of the profession. Other methods of producing officers—from running enlisted men through a three month Officer Candidate School, to giving college students supplemental ROTC training—cannot easily match this. That is why Colin Powell, who was a product of the Army ROTC program at the City College of New York, nonetheless referred to West Point as "the wellspring of our profession." Powell's ROTC mentor was a USMA graduate, and at his urging Powell visited West Point while a student. When the academies are functioning well they become seedbeds from which a relatively small number of new officers (only 17 percent of all U.S. military officers today are academy graduates) can continually reinvigorate their services with a fresh infusion of the ancient martial virtues learned at the mother church.

The academies exert a similar influence, on a smaller scale, on American society generally—by exercising and teaching a type of practical moralism that has mostly disappeared from other venues of public life. For instance, the U.S. Military Academy has a stark honor code that many other military academies have directly copied. (Thanks to an annual conference which brings college students to West Point to study its system, a growing number of civilian institutions are also now adopting honor programs.) The USMA code states, in its entirety, that "A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do." The Naval Academy has an "honor concept" that is similar to West Point's, but somewhat more rubbery.

Does this bit of chivalry make any real difference in student behavior, you may ask? Indeed it does. The academy honor codes, which are administered by the cadets and midshipmen themselves, are taken quite seriously. A single transgression can be grounds for dismissal, and in a typical year roughly 10-15 expulsions take place at each institution for honor violations.

A 1998 study conducted by two researchers from Sinclair College in Ohio found that while military academies haven't stamped out lying, cheating, and stealing, their performance in this area is "far superior" to civilian colleges that have no honor code. For instance, statistically measured *cheating* at civilian colleges

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE LONG DEPENDED UPON THE MILITARY'S WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO MAINTAIN A SEPARATE, HIGHER STANDARD OF BEHAVIOR.

"dwarfed" the level uncovered at our military, naval, and air force academies. And, interestingly, the West Point honor code—the most demanding of the lot—results in the fewest infractions. The less-demanding Naval Academy variant produces about twice as many violations, according to anonymous surveys. "All academies have strong, viable honor codes in relation to those of civilian colleges," summarize the investigators, "however the USMA honor code seems to stand head and shoulders above all others."

Honor violations aren't the only area where the Naval Academy is now struggling more than its cousins at West Point and Colorado Springs. The 1990s have brought a series of shocking scandals and mediocre results in Annapolis, and it's clear when interviewing midshipmen today that problems still remain to be solved. If you study the institutional histories you see there is clearly a *lifecycle* at all of the academies—closely linked to quality of leadership—and over the last decade and a half the Naval Academy has experienced some serious breakdowns (see our story on page 42). A string of weak Superintendents and Commandants, lax discipline which encouraged some mids to game the system, side effects of the political force-feeding of the integration of women, and wider woes afflicting the Navy (which has lacked for excellent direction at the top for some years now) have all contributed. West Point, on the other hand, currently seems to be at the top of its game. It is enjoying energetic leadership; it is far more certain of its mission; the Corps of Cadets is tight and disciplined; morale is high.

Deeper structural factors are also part of the recent divergence of these two academies. I've just touched on the different honor codes and their respective results. Another fundamental difference is how teaching is conducted in each place. At Annapolis, a majority of the instructors are civilian professors, there has been no permanent military staff, and a tour of temporary duty teaching or administering at the Yard has generally been considered undesirable by the Navy's best young officers. "In relegating the business of education largely to civilians," criticizes former professor Palm, the Academy "leaves its midshipmen wondering what the Navy really does value and expect from them." At West Point, on the other hand, 80 percent of the faculty have always been military officers, for whom there is no stigma in a rotation on the Hudson, and these officers serve not only as teachers but even more importantly as role models and sources of inspiration to cadets.

The Naval Academy is now taking small steps to chip away at this problem. The first permanent military professors have recently been appointed, and some of these (like Commander Robert Niewoehner, a former test pilot who projected both tremendous competence and powerful charisma when we visited him in his student lab and then his offices) will become important positive influences on mids. The latest Superintendent and Commandant have also tightened privileges, increased accountability, and added military tenor (by, for instance, reinstituting summer cruising on warships, and bringing experienced chief petty officers and Marine gunnery sergeants into the Yard). Nonetheless, a variety of evidence makes it clear that the Naval Academy has a good ways to go before it can claim to have restored its traditional high standards.

Recognizing that they can no longer assume incoming young people have fixed and healthy concepts of right and wrong, all of the academies are launching fresh ethics classes, virtue-building newsletters, extra training requirements, and new academic divisions stressing character education. Though these attempts are laudable, after a good deal of observation I must say that much of this effort seems ham-handed, didactic, watered-down, and fashion-driven—as book teaching in ethics is wont to be. A more effective method of moral training seems to be the older form traditionally carried out at the academies—individual example. As General Norman Schwarzkopf once wrote, West Point taught him military honor in the most effective way imaginable: "It gave us war heroes for teachers."

With its heavily military faculty, West Point is at a clear advantage in continuing this. Fully 43 percent of the USMA faculty are themselves graduates of the place. Much more than at Annapolis, therefore, there is a strong perpetuation of the institution's traditional ethos across generations of officers.

The detailed articles about the U.S. Military and Naval Academies that you are about to read—each built on many months of research and interviewing—present very different pictures. At West Point, Bill Kauffman takes a long-term look at the institution, and the men and women it attracts and then molds. In his article on Annapolis, John Meroney concentrates on shorter-term leadership travails that have battered his subject. Both places continue to be filled with some remarkable young Americans. And in both places you'll find that *most* things, at least, are going right—more so than in other institutions that shape our young.

I asked one West Point professor—a civilian, a liberal, a recent arrival from years of lecturing at prominent American colleges—whether he thought military academies could teach other schools and U.S. institutions anything about how to train up the young. "If our nation is to survive its shallow hedonism," he answered without a moment's hesitation, "it will be because of training like that of West Point."

We agree—so much so that on the pages following we've provided most of the recipes. Many of them are transferrable to other realms, and if you love kids and love America—even if you don't understand the military—you should read about what's going on in these hallowed schools. There are lessons for us all.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

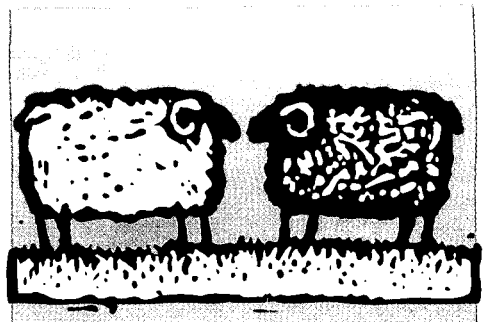
Sidelights

When **Hillary Clinton** went to a day care center to film a documentary, most of the three- to five-year-olds were forced outside into cold weather for three hours so she wouldn't be disturbed. ❧ The sexy "Baywatch," TV's most popular series ever, is now broadcast on Papua New Guinea's only TV station. ··· "Channel of the Apes" is a new TV series featuring chimpanzees and orangutans who run a television network and produce such programs as "Y-Files" and "Treewatch." ❧ Feminist **Michelle Cottle** loves the magazine *Men's Health* because it's "well on its way to making the male species as insane, insecure, and irrational about physical appearance as any *Cosmo* girl." ··· A recent *Marine Corps Gazette* has a Colonel **Robert E. Lee** reviewing a new book about **Ulysses Grant.** ··· When he was asked by a visiting U.S. ambassador last Christmas, "If you could get something, what would you like to have?" a Marine dug into Kuwaiti sand replied, "I could use some more ammunition." ··· "Some female Marines are complaining they can't stand in formation at the six-month mark of their pregnancies because the Corps doesn't provide an ample maternity uniform," the *Washington Times* reports. ··· Despite military claims to the contrary, the U.S. General Accounting Office discovered it would not cost extra for the services to house male and female recruits in single-sex barracks. ❧ A Boston charter school is offering the nation's first public-school "learning guarantee." Students failing a state assessment test in the tenth grade may choose another school to attend, and the $7,400 state funding spent on each student will follow with him or her. ··· Americans bought $900 million worth of children's school uniforms in 1998. ❧ The Army conducted ten "operational events"—life-endangering foreign missions—from 1960-91, but since then has conducted 26, the House Armed Services Committee notes. ··· In Canada, soldiers may serve after having a sex-change operation, which the government will pay for. ❧ New bumper sticker: "EARTH FIRST! *we'll log other planets later.*" ··· About 1,900 girls participated in high-school wrestling last year, according to the *Wall Street Journal,* which reports such incidents as a boy who apologized to his girl opponent when putting a hold on her, and a 119-pound boy—who could bench-press 300 pounds—being forced to forfeit a match because his coach feared he would "tear the girl apart."

A Harris poll found 44 percent of Americans want a "completely different" federal income tax, versus 21 percent who support the status quo. A solid majority favored a flat tax. ··· In 1998, 37 states cut taxes. ··· Last year employee compensation grew 6.2 percent before inflation, while pretax profits fell by 2 percent. ❧ The gun-loathing *New York Times* editorial page recently admitted, "It is not what you keep from a child, nor what town you move him to. It is what you put into him in the first place." ··· A recent *New York Times* photo caption mislabeled a B-1B bomber a B-2. ··· Military sociologist **Charles Moskos** says white women are leaving the military at a much faster rate than any other group; 43 percent "fail to complete their first enlistment because of physical problems, pregnancy, failure to adapt to the military or other reasons." It costs over $35,000 to recruit and train each one. ❧ Columnist **Richard Benedetto** notes that **Al Gore**'s bad poll numbers include "no better than a statistical tie among those who identify themselves as 'strong environmentalists.'" ··· **Elaine Kaplan,** the Justice Department counsel in charge of enforcing the ban on federal workers' soliciting political gifts, has given the Gore campaign $1,000. ··· Congress's two-year investigation of campaign finance ended with 79 witnesses pleading the Fifth, an additional 12 witnesses fleeing the country, and 23 foreigners refusing to be interviewed, reports *The Hill.* ❧ The Feminist Majority Foundation surveyed abortion clinics last year and found the number "reporting no violence continues to grow. In 1998, 63.5 percent…were free from violence, harassment, or intimidation." ··· Nationally, the number of abortion providers dropped 30 percent from 1982-96, the Alan Guttmacher Institute calculates. ❧ Saying the ethnic roots of war are "beyond the reach of classic diplomacy," **Douglas Johnston,** a former Navy officer, is resigning his post at the Center for Strategic and International Studies to found the Center for Religion and Diplomacy. ❧ **Hema Sarangapani,** Women's Alliance "chairperson" at the University of Pennsylvania, recently bragged that marching and "chanting slogans such as 'Yes Means F*** Me, No Means F*** Off' is an assertion of our right, as women and human beings, to control our own bodies." ❧ As Americans gain girth, so do their recliners. Giant models include "Everest," "Sherman," and "Patton." "Our goal was to create something you'd never have to leave," says a La-Z-Boy spokesman. —*SW*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCAN



BAAAA

Charlton Heston, telling Harvard University students that political correctness on campus has turned them into sheep, February 16, 1999:

You are the cream. But I submit that you, and your counterparts across the land, are the most socially conformed and politically silenced generation since Concord Bridge. And as long as you validate that...and abide it...you are—by your grandfathers' standards—cowards.

GOOD TEACHERS THROUGH THE BACK DOOR

When Abigail Thernstrom lectured at Cornell's law school recently, she asked the students, "How many of you would be interested in teaching if the entry requirements changed, the level of professionalism improved, and you could choose a school that matched your educational philosophy?" Thernstrom reports an "astonishing number of hands went up."

An outspoken member of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, Thernstrom wasn't asking out of idle curiosity. She and her colleagues are intent on revamping the teaching profession in the state from the bottom up. At the Board's April 26 meeting, Commissioner David Driscoll proposed an alternative certification route that would allow teacher candidates to completely bypass the notorious teacher colleges that currently monopolize classroom credentials. Would-be teachers with a bachelor's degree in the subject they intend to teach could become certified by first passing the Massachusetts teacher test (currently failed at infamously high rates by teacher-college graduates), then attending a summer institute for six to eight weeks and taking some evening and weekend follow-up sessions during the first academic year.

The purpose of alternative certification is to create a fast and inexpensive way for qualified beginning teachers and mid-career professionals to enter the classroom by breaking the education establishment's iron lock on teacher training. The implications have not escaped local union leaders. Kathy Kelley, president of the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers, says she "has two concerns about the proposal: quality and quantity. You can't just have a six- to eight-week program and some [school year] sessions and expect the same results."

Other states such as Texas use weekend and evening sessions to provide beginning teachers with additional formal training as well as opportunities to ask questions based on their real experiences in the classroom. By contrast, traditional certification procedures tend to leave teachers high and dry once they've completed the degree requirements.

While you might think providing a forum for discussing some of the problems teachers encounter after they enter the classroom would prove beneficial, Stephen Gorrie, president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association (the state's other teachers' union) complains that not everything can be learned "on the job." In reality, however, there is scant evidence that exposure to the pedagogical theory emphasized in teachers' colleges leads to any improvement in performance.

James Peyser, the chairman of Massachusetts' state education board, argues that teacher certification should be based on performance in the classroom, not formal requirements. In this spirit, the Board is also considering eliminating the master's degree requirement for all teachers and replacing it with a two-part assessment in which teachers must demonstrate both mastery of their subject matter and good classroom performance.

Peyser and other board members see the urgency of this project. Half of all Massachusetts teachers will retire in the next five to ten years. Nationally, 3 million teachers will be eligible for retirement.

With this in mind, the University of Massachusetts will run a pilot alternative certification institute this summer, even before the Board votes on the proposal in the fall. The participants will be 60 or so recent college graduates who scored exceptionally well on the Massachusetts teacher tests. Though union leaders will no doubt find fault with their performance, this group may push open the doors of Massachusetts public schools to an enthusiastic group of new teachers, who were unwilling to endure the stultifying regimen of traditional schools of education.

And the icing on the cake? Fewer smart kids trudging off to law school.

—Naomi Schaefer's report on alternative teacher certification has just been published by the Fordham Foundation.

HOW UNIONS HURT SCHOOLS

Quick: Who are the arch enemies of effective U.S. school reform? Try, sadly enough, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the two national teachers' unions. A recent conference sponsored by the Education Policy Institute outlined some of the ways these two organizations have blocked sensible change.

David Kirkpatrick, former president of the NEA's Pennsylvania state affiliate, warned that the unions often act against the best interests of their own members. In San Francisco, for instance, union officials filed a grievance against a charter

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

school which proposed to pay union members up to $3,600 a year *more* than they would earn in a standard public school. The reason: Union members negotiated the contract without getting union approval.

Kirkpatrick also recalled the fate of calculus teacher Jaime Escalante, whose stunning success at teaching advanced mathematics to poor children in Los Angeles's Garfield High was the basis of the popular film *Stand and Deliver*. Because Escalante wouldn't turn down any child who wanted to enter his class, he frequently taught up to 70 children at a time—three times the maximum number allowed under the union contract. Union representatives then ensured that Escalante was removed as chairman of the Garfield math department. Escalante concluded that the union was "more interested in politics than kids."

Education Policy Institute president Charlene Haar reported on the way unions use mandatory dues to reward their political allies on the left. In recent years, for example, the NEA has donated more than a million dollars to left-wing organizations like People for the American Way, the National Organization for Women, the American Association of University Women, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. In addition, the two unions contributed $221,165 in the last election cycle to the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (along with untold donations of time and services).

But a far larger expense for the teachers' unions, Haar reported, is the $25 million they spend each year on legal activism. Much of this is directed toward political causes. For example, in Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, union funds were spent to oppose school choice efforts. In New Jersey, the teachers' union spent $475,000 to successfully block Governor Christie Whitman's effort to contract out management of some public schools and to implement vouchers. In Wisconsin, the teachers' union spent $280,000 to defeat an initiative that would have reduced property taxes. According to NEA disclosures, about 40 percent of teachers' annual dues are spent on such activities unrelated to collective bargaining.

Baltimore lawyer George Liebmann noted that unions have also persuaded states to impose formidable restrictions to prevent the entrance of competitors. "Agency shop" provisions, for example, ensure that if a competing union were to enter a district, teachers would have to pay two sets of dues. Unions are also behind certification requirements for new teachers, which ensure that only individuals who have taken scores of mind-numbing education courses can be hired as teachers, principals, and school superintendents.

Liebmann suggested battling back by instituting parent councils. These councils, created both by Tories in Great Britain and Labour Party governments in New Zealand and Australia, control up to 85 percent of a school's budget and also have the power to hire and fire teachers and principals. They could empower parents and concerned citizens who are currently disenfranchised by teachers' unions.

BILINGUAL ED FOLLOW-UP

When Proposition 227, the Republican-backed measure requiring a shift away from bilingual education to English-immersion teaching, was passed by California voters in 1998, opponents cried doom. In practice, however, the results have been very encouraging, as this report by Los Angeles Times *writer Louis Sahagun indicates.*

At elementary schools scattered across Los Angeles, teachers are delivering promising reports that their students are learning English more quickly than anticipated six months after the implementation of the antibilingual education law, Proposition 227.

"I honestly didn't expect to see them achieve as well as they are doing," said Jose Posada, bilingual education coordinator at Los Angeles Elementary School in Koreatown. "Many of us who believed in the bilingual education program were scared about the unknowns," he said. "Now we're saying, 'Well, maybe it's not so bad. Maybe it's time we start talking about the positives.'"

In interviews at 13 Los Angeles Unified School District campuses with large immigrant populations, primary grade teachers said their students are absorbing [oral] English at a surprising pace. Some children are even taking the next step and learning to read and write in English....

Officials at Charles W. Barrett Elementary School in South Central Los Angeles report encouraging progress.... "Our 132 students are learning academic English faster than anticipated," said bilingual education coordinator Jesus Romero....

"I expected that their self-esteem would be affected, and that they would feel inhibited, give up easily," said Yomy Duran, a second-grade teacher at Dena Elementary School southeast of downtown. "Instead, they are excited, motivated...."

A few miles away, at First Street Elementary School, Irma Rodriguez cooed that her daughters, a kindergartner and a third-grader, "are learning to speak, which is what I always wanted. We're all happy...."

MORE STUPID INSTRUCTIONS

Collected by Richard Lederer

- *On Saintsbury's peanuts:* Warning—contains nuts.
- *On a Husquavarna chain saw:* Do not attempt to stop chain with your hands.
- *On a bottle of flavored milk drink:* After opening, keep upright.
- *On a CycleAware helmet-mounted mirror:* Remember—Objects in the mirror are actually behind you.
- *On a car lock that loops around the clutch and steering wheel:* Warning—Remove lock before driving.
- *On a packet of airline peanuts:* Open packet and eat contents.
- *On a camera:* This camera only works when there is a film inside.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Until this year, most of First Street School's 800 students learned to read and write in Spanish in kindergarten through third grade, with English phased in later. Since Proposition 227 was implemented last summer, children with limited English skills have been placed in year-long English immersion programs....

At the start of the school year, First Street principal Judy Leff, a firm supporter of bilingual education, led a series of parent meetings aimed at ensuring that residents understood their options, including their right to seek a waiver to continue traditional bilingual instruction.

By the time classes began in September, Leff said, fewer than 20 waivers had been requested. Instead, she said, the vast majority of parents chose to enroll their children in a structured English immersion program.

HE'S LYING AGAIN . . .

(and not just about sex)

The Media Research Center caught these comments by Tim Russert, NBC News Washington bureau chief, on the "Imus in the Morning" radio show.

DON IMUS: Here's my question: Why, why is [Secretary of Energy] Bill Richardson reluctant to just tell us what's going on?

TIM RUSSERT: Because if he does, he has put the President of the United States in a position where he is lying about national security. There's no other way to say it. In March the President was asked by [NBC's] David Bloom very specifically: Did, in fact, the Chinese gain any nuclear secrets on [your] watch? The President said No, No. No one ever told me about any espionage at our labs (and he threw in "labs" thinking that that way he could have an out if other espionage was revealed, which he already knew about).

Well, now it turns out that in November of [1998] he, and Richardson, and [Defense] Secretary Cohen, and Secretary [of State] Albright were given a report by the counter-intelligence forces in the United States saying very specifically that over 300 times outsiders had penetrated computers at our nuclear labs and had taken nuclear secrets. Straightforward and everyone knew it to be the case. Now, when did this happen? November.... Nothing was done about it until April of '99. What was happening in November and December of last year? You got it: impeachment, Monica Lewinsky.

TIME FOR AN UMBRELLA

Now that it's been established, no thanks to our Commander in Chief and his security advisers, that China has stolen extremely dangerous nuclear information from us, perhaps America will awaken from a potentially catastrophic slumber and recognize her need for missile defense.

In conjunction with Charlton Research, the Heritage Foundation recently surveyed the public on missile defense, and the findings are alarming. A slight majority of Americans believe the U.S. is currently able to defend herself to some extent against nuclear attack—which is flatly untrue. (One reassuring number: Eighty percent of Americans are disturbed our military budget has been cut so drastically in the Clinton years.)

Only very recently has the President entertained even the possibility of building a missile defense system to protect the U.S. He and other opponents of a shield have cited the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, signed during the Cold War by the U.S. and the Soviet Union, which pledged both sides to limit the deployment of systems that could protect against incoming missiles. Advocates of missile defense insist the ABM treaty became null and void once the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, but the treaty continues to be trotted out by opponents. Charlton's study indicates that Americans are unaware of the contradiction between the ABM treaty and missile defense: People generally claim to support both the treaty *and* the importance of protecting ourselves from rogue nations that may soon be able to kill hundreds of thousands or even millions of Americans in a single attack.

Democrats on Capitol Hill have argued, so far successfully, against renouncing the ABM treaty, and Republicans have never presented a strong enough argument to overcome their foot-dragging. Now with a defiant China growing stronger by the day, and possessed of all our nuclear secrets, it is time to take our need for self-defense of our cities seriously.

THE FAN-DOM MENACE

Does *The Phantom Menace*, the fourth film in writer-director George Lucas's *Star Wars* series, deserve its staggering success? If you believe there's still room for the kind of heroic movies that used to define American cinema, the answer is an unequivocal yes.

Lucas's space saga, an overarching tale of good versus evil (and of how those two forces may be more connected than you first suspect), is at once as triumphantly American as *Stagecoach* or *Rocky* and as tragically American as *The Godfather* or *Citizen Kane*. Yet while most critics bow before those four films, they often dismiss the *Star Wars* myths. *Time, Newsweek,* the *Los Angeles Times,* the *Washington Post, Rolling Stone,* and other outlets all droned on with lukewarm reviews that predictably praised the computer-generated imagery while blasting the stolid performances and clunky script (as if they expected a *Star Wars* installment to feature virtuoso acting and Shakespearean wit). Could it be that something else is bothering these critics, something connected to a prejudice against films that are simple, earnest, and just plain good?

First consider the charges against the film's simplicity. True, despite a narrative that dabbles in Christian theology, fatalism, and Buddhist thought, *The Phantom Menace* isn't overladen with complicated

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ideas. Instead, the plot—which follows a pair of valiant Jedi knights as they fend off a malicious attack on a peaceful planet—relies on the ingenuous wisdom of storybooks, the kind of sageness that seems obvious only because it's so true. "You always say the worst thing about this universe is that people don't help each other enough," a boy repeats to his mother at one point. One can scoff at such a line or choose to hear it through the ears of a child, remembering that for kids, the concept of justice only becomes clear when it's illustrated in a story like this fairy-tale, filled with eye-popping aliens and the endless gowns of a teenaged queen. Perhaps the reviewers who recoiled from the movie's platitudes simply succumbed to the intellectual bias of adulthood. What's a critic to do with a movie that doesn't need to be explained to the audience?

More disheartening is the beating *The Phantom Menace* took for its earnestness. Each year, Hollywood's products grow more cynical and self-aware. If a movie eschews this oh-so-hip edge—if its young hero says his dream is to fly in a spaceship, and he means nothing more than that—then it will be mercilessly punctured by reviewers' barbs. In an age drenched with irony, sincerity is often rejected out of hand.

Lucas's PG-rated fantasy beats with the proverbial heart of gold—from the glowing pastures of the planet Naboo to the kid-friendly sidekick named Jar Jar Binks. Missing out on the movie's innocent magic—the way it brings alive a childlike tale about doing right and resisting wrong with imaginative vision—some critics have instead frothed over presumed slights. The computer-animated Jar Jar Binks, for instance, has been criticized as politically incorrect for speaking in a pseudo-Jamaican patois. The *Chicago Tribune*'s Mark Caro even steamed that the character walks with an "exaggerated pimp strut."

These are the same sort of critics who hail dark films like 1995's *Leaving Las Vegas*—a miserably graphic testament to the joys of suicide—as cinematic wonders. For the "serious" critic, you see, a great movie can be anything—cruel, nihilistic, violent, depraved—just as long as it's not good at heart.

Thankfully, most moviegoers don't agree. Yes, this means they'll sometimes flock to worthless flicks like last summer's *Armageddon*. But it also means they're open-minded enough to appreciate the acumen of a movie like *Forrest Gump*.

So don't look to the critics for an honest assessment of this summer's biggest pop culture event. It's the public's adoration that proves *The Phantom Menace* is a great American movie.

—Josh Larsen is a TAE *contributing writer.*

THE CUTTING EDGE

What would you call a brother and sister who produced four children together? The law calls them criminal: Patty Muth is currently serving five years in a federal prison in Wisconsin; Allen Muth is serving eight.

Hollywood, however, calls them something else—movie stars. A film of their life, called *The First Taboo,* is now under development. Co-producer Dan Klores sees the Muths as an exciting "outlaw" couple.

IS STAR WARS A MONEY LOSER?

Based on some calculations of the millions of adults missing work to attend the weekday opening of the new Star Wars prequel *The Phantom Menace*, John Challenger of workplace consultants Challenger, Gray & Christmas has estimated that the opening day national premiere may have cost the nation some $293 million in lost job productivity. Meanwhile, in its first *five days*, the movie's total receipts came to just $106 million. At this rate it'll be July before the national economy even gets back to even for all that day-one hooky playing. But then, of course, you can't put a monetary price on defeating evil.

THE GERM-AUSTRO-OTTO-NIPPO-BRITISH EMPIRE

Students at The Citadel, South Carolina's 157-year-old military academy, invited presidential aspirant Patrick J. Buchanan to speak at their May 8 Commencement. An abridged version of his address follows.

Long ago, Teddy Roosevelt admonished us to "Speak softly and carry a big stick." Today, we have whittled down the stick, even as we raised the decibel count. We have become ensnared in a civil war in a Balkan peninsula where no U.S. army ever fought, and no President ever asserted a vital interest. Our motives were noble—to protect an abused people—but most now concede we failed to weigh the risks of launching this war.

America should have learned from Vietnam: Before you commit the Army, you must first commit the nation. We did not do that.

Milosevic is a tyrant and a war criminal. But does America have the right to, as a *New York Times* columnist put it, "pulverize" a nation that never attacked the United States? Did the Founding Fathers dedicate their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to the cause of liberty, so that the republic they would create could emulate the empire they overthrew?

In his Farewell Address, our greatest President implored us to stay out of Europe's endless quarrels: "Why," Washington asked, "entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European Ambition, Rivalship, Interest, Humour, or Caprice?"

Now that America is at war, all of us pray for the success and safe return of those we have sent into battle. They are some of the best and bravest of our young. But all citizens must debate when to put their lives at risk. For we have now undertaken foreign commitments no empire has ever sustained. We have assumed the role of the German empire in keeping Russia out of Europe, of the Austrian empire in policing the Balkans, of the Ottoman empire in keeping peace in the Middle East, of the Japanese empire in containing China, of the British empire in patrolling the Gulf

WEAK STRONGMAN

"Being by this time a weak man, he had decided to be strong. And he would be strong at the wrong time and for the wrong reasons."

—Characterization of British Prime Minister Lloyd George by a member of his cabinet after he launched a "humanitarian" war in Turkey in the 1920s similar to Bill Clinton's Kosovo effort.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and maintaining freedom of the seas.

How long can American continue to defend scores of countries on a defense budget that has fallen to the smallest share of the economy since Pearl Harbor? As we see a limited air war in the Balkans stretch U.S. power to where F-16s are cannibalized for spare parts, our Air Force runs low on laser-guided munitions, our Apache helicopters take weeks to be deployed, and our Pacific fleet is stripped of carriers, it is clear: The long neglect of America's military must end.

Let us make our country, again, invincible on land, sea, and air, and build the missile defense that Ronald Reagan sought. To be prepared for war, Washington knew, is the best guarantee of preserving peace.

There is cause for apprehension over what lies ahead, but also cause for confidence and hope. That hope rests not only on the boundless resources of this providential land, but on the almost infinite capacity of Americans to overcome any challenge.

Now the time of testing is coming for you.

The America this Class of '99 shall inherit is prosperous and powerful, but also envied and resented. Whether America retains into this new century what she carries out of this old one depends on your generation.

At the end of your lives, you will look back and say one of two things: Yes, we, too, made our contribution to the preservation of the greatest republic the world has ever seen. Or you will say that it was during your custodianship that the lamp began to flicker, that we began to follow all the other great nations down the staircase of history.

All will depend on the character and courage of this generation, for as Churchill said, courage is the greatest of all virtues, because it alone makes the others possible.

TIME TO RESHAPE OUR MILITARY

In war, Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest had it right: "Git thar fustest with the mostest." Just now, however, the United States lacks the ability to move men and matériel swiftly around the

© 1999 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

globe—even if our President did possess a willingness to endure combat.

The way Milosevic raped Kosovo demonstrates that American opponents watched the months-long build-up that preceded Desert Storm, and learned a lesson. They now know to move quickly on the ground to achieve their objectives before U.S. forces can be brought into position. And then to leave behind a nuisance force whose removal will torment the U.S. and her allies.

Our current military forces are designed, built, and trained to repulse the heavy Soviet tank forces that used to reside along the old Iron Curtain. We cannot swiftly position heavy ground troops anywhere. A U.S. armored division in its current Cold War configuration consists of 17,000 men, 290 tanks, 232 Bradley fighting vehicles, 72 tracked howitzers, 79 tank retrievers, and 88 helicopters. The machines alone weigh 300,000 tons, or about three times a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

It is about as intricate and expensive to move this equipment as it is actually to use it in combat. Individual parts of a large combat unit may be fairly quickly delivered to any airstrip that can accommodate large military transports. But our actual battle plans require having all such equipment massed together, and this requires an inordinate amount of time. A President could quickly introduce ground forces by sending planeloads of infantrymen to a trouble spot. But without at least armed helicopters and the support of 120mm battle tanks this force would be terribly vulnerable.

Far more robust than a group of lightly defended infantrymen is the unit of 24 Apache helicopters Clinton sent to Albania from their base in Germany in April. But fearing for their safety, the President has refused to use them. The Apache's mission is to help a ground force advance by destroying enemy mechanized equipment. Armed with long-range tactical missiles and powerful cannons, they are a fearsome weapon. But only if they are used.

And even just these two dozen Apaches took three weeks to move the rough equivalent of the distance from Boston to Atlanta. The Army initially blamed the slowness on competition with humanitarian relief flights for cargo space, as well as on insufficiently safe conditions at the airport in Albania (the same airport that has serviced Austrian Airlines and Swissair passenger flights).

Three months to put a significant American ground force in place to begin combat operations is too long a time. Defense experts have been saying since before the Cold War ended that the U.S. military must acquire the ability to move

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE JAPANESE MIRACLE

Japan's annual budget deficit is well over ten percent of GDP, with its total debt obligations exceeding 100 percent of GDP. Into the indefinite future, the Japanese government must borrow an additional $36 billion per month. In the United States, where the economy is twice as big, that would be the equivalent of the government borrowing $864 billion per year.

—*John Makin, AEI Economic Outlook, May 1999*

powerful forces swiftly around the world. Nevertheless, the Army of today looks much like the Army of 1989, only smaller.

The solution to this cumbersome state of military affairs is to field an armed force organized and equipped to move fast. We should significantly reduce the size of combat divisions, retaining needed firepower yet allowing them to be moved quickly as integral fighting units. A division based on 5,000 or 8,000 men would be easier and faster to move than the current ones two and three times larger. The Army has more or less rejected such ideas, as the Navy has rejected forward-thinking efforts to replace some combat power delivered by carrier-based planes with equal power borne aloft from large, nearly submerged vessels that could carry thousands of cruise missiles.

Kosovo has exposed the lack of flexibility we suffer by adhering to a ground force still locked in Cold War assumptions. If the air campaign against Milosevic lasts much longer, it will also shed embarrassing light on the military's restricted supply and thus ability to use cruise missiles.

Achieving military victory requires not only good weapons but also thoughtful organization and wise strategy. Not to mention the will to fight and win.

—***Seth Cropsey**, an AEI fellow and Naval Reserve officer, served as deputy undersecretary of the Navy under Reagan and Bush.*

HOPE THE "ISSUES" DIDN'T GIVE THEM A "COMPLEX"

The *Hartford Courant* reported in May that Wesleyan University, the tony Connecticut liberal arts college, now has a course taught by Professor Hope Weissman entitled "Pornography." And Professor Weissman doesn't believe in relying on secondary sources: Every student has to create his or her own work of pornography. One submitted a short film of a man masturbating. Another acted out a bondage scene.

"Porn studies are very chic right now," chirped one undergrad. Jordan Kurland of the American Association of University Professors explained that this is part of a nationwide campus trend. "There's an intense occupation with sex, deviant sex, that once would have been regarded by 90 percent of the population as just plain scuzzy."

Weissman, who helped found the women's studies program at Wesleyan, said no student submission would be considered over the line. "I push people over the line," she explained. Some of the students admitted feeling uncomfortable in the class. "They were having issues the whole semester," stated Weissman. "That's all right, I want them to have issues."

The voice of modern education.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

In January 1999, President Clinton stated that "women earn about 75 cents for every dollar a man earns." The National Committee on Pay Equity declared April 8, 1999, Equal Pay Day, to protest the claim that women earn only 74 percent of men's wages. If these claims are to be believed, then American women are still second-class citizens.

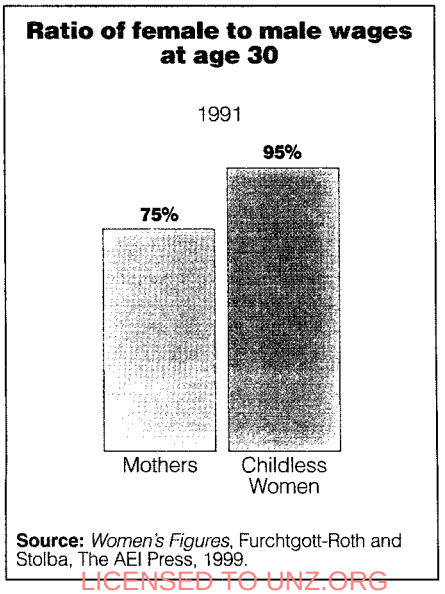
But both President Clinton and the activist groups that routinely use these statistics fail to adjust for such crucial factors in determining wages as occupation, position, age, experience, education, and consecutive years in the work force. It is well known that the wage gap between men and women is much more accurately described by adjusting for those factors. It is also far smaller.

How much less do *equally qualified* women make than men? Surprisingly, given all the misused statistics to the contrary, they make about 95 to 98 cents to the man's dollar (according to studies by June O'Neill of the City University of New York and Jane Waldfogel of Columbia University).

The most obvious effect on female wages is the decision to have children. The adjoining bar graph illustrates the substantial differences in pay between mothers and childless women. It also shows the pay of childless 30-year-old women totaled 95 percent of male pay in 1991.

Eighty percent of women bear children at some point in their lives, and a quarter of women work part-time; so a higher percentage of women's time in their work years is spent away from the job. Women, who are typically the primary caregivers for their children, consider the responsibilities of motherhood when making employment decisions, and many women choose jobs where flexibility is greater and salaries are lower. Given those choices, comparing the *average* wages of men and women is a misuse of statistics and a grossly misleading comparison.

—*excerpted from* Women's Figures, *by economist Diana Furchtgott-Roth and historian Christine Stolba.*



Source: *Women's Figures*, Furchtgott-Roth and Stolba, The AEI Press, 1999.

ANOTHER HEALTHY SIGN

More evidence that Gen Xers are not the profligates of popular depiction: A recent survey by Roper Starch Worldwide found Americans over age 50 didn't start saving for retirement, on average, until they were in their late thirties. Today's young Americans between 18 and 34, on the other hand, started saving money at an average age of 23.

This is encouraging—for saving is, of course, a discipline. And any person who succeeds at socking away money has the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

promise of mastering other forms of self-denial and long-range thinking as well.

WHY THE MALE PRESENCE?

When the National Organization for Women recently held its third Lesbian Rights Summit in Washington, D.C., NOW president Patricia Ireland stated that "maybe half" of NOW's members are lesbians.

But it's obvious NOW's leaders don't love all ladies, for they denied a female reporter for the conservative *Washington Times* press credentials to cover the event. (Like a properly undeferential woman, she showed up anyway.)

Out in the audience, a couple of men also turned out. This "caused a whiff of nervousness to run about the room," reported Julia Duin (the pushy *Times* journalist). One conferee objected clinically, "Why the male presence?" The most visible male assured her that "I'm a member of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered community."

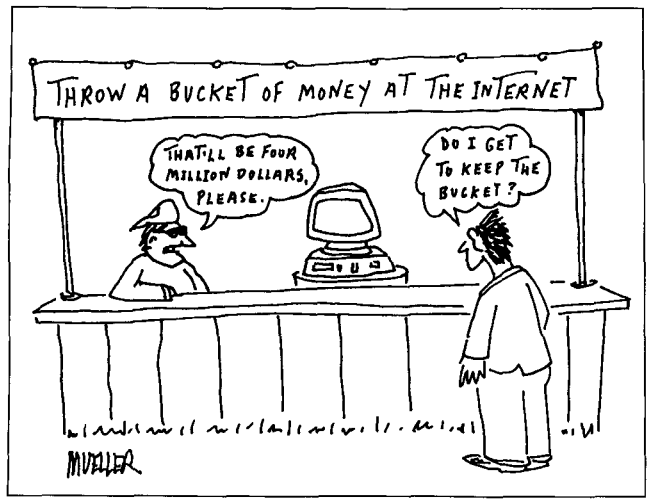
Which must have been a great relief to these militants for tolerance.

AP Photo/Ed Andrieski

Bethanee and Dana, sisters of Columbine victim Rachel Scott, pay their respects at her grave site.

THE CULTURE WAR TURNS DEADLY

One of the first of the recent string of high school shootings took place in 1997 in West Paducah, Kentucky. The shooter was a twisted freshman named Michael Carneal. His targets? Members of the student prayer group at Heath High School.



This largely forgotten fact lends some worrisome perspective to the horrific Littleton shootings. For Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold also zeroed in on one particular group. Despite the misleading early reports that "jocks" and "minorities" were targeted, few of the victims fell into either of those categories. Eight of those killed, however, and others of those who were wounded, did share one trait: They were serious Christians.

The story of Cassie Bernall, who was carrying a Bible, wearing a "What Would Jesus Do?" bracelet, and praying when one of the gunmen mocked her belief in God then shot her, is well known. But fewer of the public know that virtually identical circumstances applied in the shooting of Valeen Schnurr. She too was carrying a Bible and calling on God when she was shot amidst taunts at her religious belief (which, like Cassie, she refused to disavow even at gunpoint). Schnurr survived nine gunshot and shrapnel wounds, but still carries four bullets in her abdomen.

The attackers—who had steeped themselves in some of the virulently anti-religious popular music and movies peddled to teens today—also went after, and killed, Rachel Scott because she was carrying a Bible. John Tomlin, 16, is also thought to have been singled out for death because of his Christian beliefs. All told, eight of the 12 students murdered at Columbine were serious Christians.

In other words, the culture wars have reached the shooting stage. Yet most politicians and commentators have been strangely silent on this disturbing pattern. Imagine the level of rhetoric, media campaigning, and bill writing that would now be underway if the gunmen had singled out, say, eight homosexual students for execution.

If the religious were disproportionately numbered among the victims of Harris and Klebold's nihilism, they have also poured out in great numbers among the mourners. The public memorial service packed by 70,000 community members quickly turned it into a powerful devotional. Franklin Graham (Billy Graham's son) sparked unusual applause from the crowd when he remarked, "It is time for this nation to recognize that when we empty the public schools of the moral teachings and standards of our holy God, they are indeed very dangerous places."

Predictably, a small number of liberal critics were annoyed. "It turned into an evangelical prayer service," said one Denver rabbi. Another rabbi who was invited to speak at the occasion afterwards criticized the service (with its 70,000 participants ranging from Colin Powell, to the parent of the slain students, to singer Amy Grant) as reflecting an "ignorant, narrow-minded" streak of Christianity.

This debate is now carrying over into a debate on the permanent memorial that will be built to solemnize the tragedy. There is strong community support for a remembrance with a Christian or biblical theme, because of the religious faith that was central to many of the slain. "The decision should be left up to the people who went to Columbine," argues one recent graduate of the high school. "If God helped them through this, why shouldn't that be shown at the memorial?" But secular activists promise

TELL US ABOUT IT

"I hate it when people blame someone else and don't take responsibility."

—President Clinton, speaking on the Colorado school shooting.

"Part of growing up is learning how to control one's impulses."

—Hillary Clinton, speaking on the Colorado school shooting as the President stood behind her.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to block any such memorial.

Teens flocked to houses of worship after the attack, while almost completely avoiding the mental health workers sent to the scene by the county to serve as counselors. "Frankly," one local pastor told *World* magazine, referring to the county counselors, "some of those people needed help, and our kids ended up counseling them." Observing the wave of religious comfort sweeping the community, even jaded reporters concluded that "God…has surely pitched camp in Littleton."

Conversely, in the view of many Americans it was the banishment of God and moral principle which helped open the door to the many little acts of evil which culminated in this massacre. "Our society doesn't want God. Neither do we want evil. But if God is not welcomed, the counterpart will fill the moral vacuum," notes an acquaintance who recently returned from visiting Littleton. The Reverend Katherine Day, an Episcopal priest from New York who also visited Littleton after the attack, warns, "Evil is real, and evil does break out." What struck her, she said, were the little immoralities that sped Harris and Klebold along their way; for example the fact that some merchant had copied the keys to the school for the gunmen, even though they were clearly marked "do not duplicate."

Her point extends far: How could parents let their son plaster a swastika on the car they gave him? Why did no teacher challenge the boys on their violent video, submitted as a class project, which was a virtual dress rehearsal for the rampage? What kind of laxity and indulgence allowed the county probation officers and the sheriff's office to ignore the evidence—some of it shoved in their faces by alarmed neighbors—of the badness of these boys?

Evil builds up in little derelictions. And it can root in any person if not systematically resisted. The Littleton horror illustrates that well. We fear this terrible reality is going to prove itself again and again in coming years, until Americans recognize that today's culture wars are real assaults, with real victims, and that decent and peaceful Americans cannot afford to lose them.

UNLEASHING THE SAVAGE WITHIN

Although suicide rates among older Americans have been relatively stable over the past 40 years, the incidence of suicide among 15- to 19-year-olds has quadrupled. Is this linked to the songs, movies, and television young people now consume? Specifically, is there a link between today's dark popular music and kids killing themselves? For me, the suicides of the disturbed boys in Littleton made two more case histories in the "yes" column—along with my brother.

Yes, my 18-year-old baby brother ended it all listening to some of the same spooky stuff favored by Harris and Klebold. In the last six months of his life, he became obsessed with death, Satan, and music by bands like Bauhaus, Marilyn Manson, and KMFDM.

William Congreve said, "Music has charms to sooth a savage breast." But certain forms can *unleash* the savage within us. Gloomy "Gothic," heavy metal, and grunge music brings out the dark side of susceptible youth. Most self-described Goths are fascinated by things like black magic, vampire literature, animal sacrifice, and witchcraft. Many have a morbid death interest.

My brother Bart had been dogged by manic-depressive illness his whole life. But when he committed suicide, we found satanic literature and a bizarre tape in his Honda Prelude that made it clear he had been brainwashed into a demonic glee at the prospect of ending his life.

With loud Megadeath music blaring in the background, Bart's slurred diatribe begins with a voice I do not recognize: "Don't think that I didn't enjoy life, but death is the ULTIMATE LIFE HAS TO OFFER!" He continues in a whisper, "A gift." Then in a shrill baritone, "The ALPHA AND OMEGA! PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO DIE, BUT TO DIE IS TO LIVE. YOU ARE REBORN!" Then he hisses, "You're not dead. There isn't an end. I think it would be enjoyable to find out what that feeling is NOW!" The tape abruptly ends. I surmise that's when he started the car and took his life by carbon monoxide poisoning.

How can we say these forms of "entertainment" are only "harmless forms of self-expression for students trying to find themselves"? A chillingly dark culture influenced Bart and those two Littleton killers. One witness in Colorado noted, "They were laughing after they shot people. It was like they were having the time of their life." Bart had clung to the rope of life until he discovered Gothic culture; then he turned on the ignition of death and gassed himself.

I agree with columnist William Raspberry that youngsters who are so troubled "must be lacking in religious faith—without a belief in anything that could take them outside themselves." If the house of their mind is empty, something will fill it. Drugs, gangs, and vile popular entertainments are not hard to find today. Meanwhile, American elites panic if someone has the audacity to utter a forbidden prayer in a school.

There is no guarantee with children. They have free choice. Although broken-hearted after my brother's suicide, I know the onus for his death rests with him. Nevertheless, I want to give my own children the best odds possible. This includes securing them in a faith that assures there is a God who loves them. But it also includes battling the cultural and commercial forces that promote evil alternatives. Decent Americans need to fighter harder on this, before it is too late.

—Suzy Ryan writes from Oceanside, California.

NICE THOUGHT NICE LANGUAGE

Describing the recently passed "emergency spending bill"—where Congress used various disasters plus Kosovo as an excuse for billions in pork, inflating the total cost from the $6 billion the President asked for to more than $15 billion—Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott told reporters: "It sucks, but let's pass it anyway."

ROLLING THE DICE

Americans now legally gamble more than $600 billion a year, according to Eugene Christiansen in *International Gaming and Wagering Bus*[illegible]his, notes National Gambling Impact Study Commission member James Dob[illegible] the [illegible] $450 [illegible] year Americans spend [illegible] grocer[illegible]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE JOURNALIST AND FORMER DEMOCRATIC OPERATOR WHO NOW HOSTS THE POPULAR TV SHOW "HARDBALL" SERVES UP OPINIONS ON POLITICS, POLITICIANS, AND THE MEDIA.

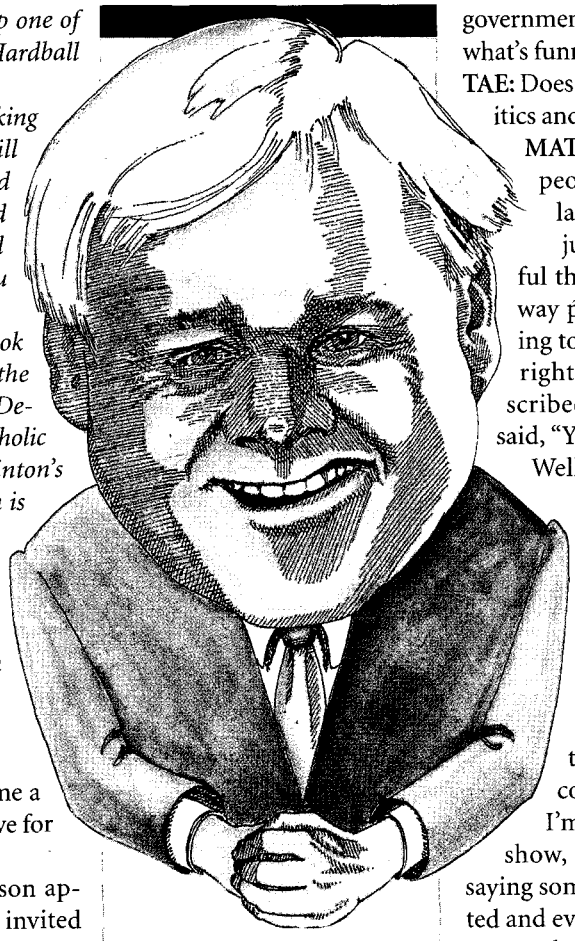
Christopher Matthews

Every weeknight at 8:00, CNBC offers up one of the hottest political programs around: "Hardball with Chris Matthews."

The 53-year-old Matthews is no talking head dilettante. This former Capitol Hill policeman worked for Senator Edmund Muskie, President Jimmy Carter, and House Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill before signing on as Washington bureau chief of the San Francisco Examiner.

He distilled his experience in his book Hardball, *a primer on how to survive the rough and tumble of American politics. Despite his Democratic lineage, the Irish Catholic Matthews has been among President Clinton's sharpest critics on his nightly show, which is famed for its fast, almost frenetic pace.*

TAE's John Meroney interviewed Matthews in his office on Capitol Hill, where he enjoys a stellar view of the one American city where politics and media are the biggest industries.



TAE: Punditry in Washington has become a cottage industry. What advice do you have for those just getting into the profession?

MATTHEWS: Put it this way: If a person appears on our show and then is never invited back, it isn't because he was unpolished, nervous, or a geek. It's that he didn't have any information to share—or took three hours to share it. If you can capsulize hard information on television, you'll be much in demand.

TAE: Do you have any qualms about merging serious politics with entertainment as is done on "Politically Incorrect" and other shows?

MATTHEWS: I'm against it. I've been on the show, and if you care about an issue, you're sort of the fool. Those who get the laughs are the ones who are flippant and irreverent. Making fun of abortion? There's nothing funny about it. It's not a subject of humor. There are aspects of politics which are funny, but the actual issues—government, Social Security, minimum wage—what's funny about that stuff?

TAE: Does "Hardball" blur the line between politics and entertainment?

MATTHEWS: Well, I'd like to think that people can occasionally get a real good laugh because I'll say something that just cuts through some b.s. I'm hopeful they'll feel good after watching it, the way people felt good in the '60s after going to an anti-war rally and hearing a civil rights folk song. When Bob Dylan described himself as an entertainer, some said, "You're much more serious than that." Well, a person can be very serious *and* entertaining. But he must understand that these causes are real, and these arguments important. I do. Bill Maher and "Politically Incorrect" sees the absurdity in the arguments. I see the essential importance of them, and the absurdity of how badly they're handled. They see the absurdity in caring. "Hardball" couldn't be more different from that. I'm sure if they invited me back on the show, I'd try. But I think I would end up saying something very passionate and committed and everyone would laugh.

Liberals should be the last to argue that the presidency doesn't carry moral authority.

TAE: When Johnny Carson was hosting "The Tonight Show," he would have such people as William F. Buckley, Jr., as guests.

MATTHEWS: Great days. Richard Nixon went on Jack Paar's Friday night show in 1963, played the piano, and was fabulous.

TAE: So why don't you see that with Jay Leno or David Letterman?

MATTHEWS: Because those shows are basically working to an audience that's so general and so unambitious. Carson would have Truman Capote *and* Robert Blake. He'd always have writers on—there was a book slot at the end. He and Dick Cavett used to do that. Cavett would have Norman Mailer and Gore Vidal going at

Illustration by Lucinda S. Levine

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it—all those wonderful literary feuds.

TAE: Who does "Hardball" appeal to?

MATTHEWS: I like to think people watch me with the same attitude with which they watched "All in the Family." I'm hopeful they say, I'll watch Christopher now, and then I'll watch "NYPD Blue" or "Law and Order."

TAE: Do you think there are too many Ivy League-types in today's Washington press corps?

MATTHEWS: They're not Ivy Leaguers. Maybe they are at the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*. But Jack Germond has more political passion than any of the new breed. He still cares about the working man and the unions. You're not going to find that among the new ones. They don't carry a torch for the labor guy or the working guy.

TAE: But what about their political ideology? Polls show journalists are overwhelmingly liberal.

MATTHEWS: I'm sure they'll all vote Democrat because that's what you do, but I don't think it means much in terms of commitment.

TAE: If you were just going into journalism, would you follow the same path you did—working as a White House speechwriter, then for Tip O'Neill, and then moving into the press? Or would you start off doing straight reporting for *Roll Call* or a daily paper?

MATTHEWS: Well, I did some of that, too. I was one of the poor people Ralph Nader hired to run the Capitol Hill News Service back in 1973. I did it for three months and didn't like it. It was investigative, hard, and negative. I didn't want to go to politicians and test them on financial disclosure. You'd nitpick and break these little stories that ruin their lives for a month, and *maybe* end up on the front page. I didn't think that was interesting. I was more pro-politician. I respect anybody who has the guts to run for office. There's a big price to pay.

TAE: Do you go on the Internet and read the *Drudge Report*?

MATTHEWS: I never look at the *Drudge Report*.

TAE: Why?

MATTHEWS: I'm not interested. I don't need that.

TAE: You don't want to read about a story before it breaks?

MATTHEWS: No, I don't look at it. I read the papers in morning, listen to Don Imus on the radio, and read the wires.

TAE: Do you have reporters or ghostwriters working for you?

MATTHEWS: Not me. I write every word. I do all the research, too. For example, the last couple months I was able to break two good stories for the *Examiner*. Senator Dianne Feinstein let me see her presidential censure proposal, and no one else had seen it. She wouldn't let me scribble while I was looking at it, but I remembered it and reported it that day in the afternoon paper. I got the story about Senator Barbara Boxer playing matchmaker between Senator Pat Moynihan and Mrs. Clinton. Front page.

TAE: Do you find that because TV takes such a chunk of your day, you don't have enough time to work the telephones and do the reporting that you did before your TV career?

MATTHEWS: Is that a question? That's not a question. That's a statement. And I concur. Getting on the phone and making calls is probably even harder than writing. Its takes juice to get on that phone, call strangers, and make things happen. My experience is that you're not going to get a story unless you're physically in the presence, or close enough to the person who's got it, to get it from them. If I were not as exposed as I am by being in the media, I wouldn't be able to get the stories by cold calling. Every story I've ever broken, I've always gotten through relationships. That's the only way to get a story: You have to get it *from* somebody. Somebody has to deliver something that hasn't been in the newspaper yet. And you're unlikely to get it in a cold call.

TAE: How would Tip O'Neill have voted on impeachment?

MATTHEWS: Oh, he would have voted with the party. He would have defended Clinton, but he probably would have made a couple of comments along the way. Why do you ask about him?

TAE: Well, you worked for him.

MATTHEWS: Yeah, I worked for him.

TAE: So you probably have a lot of insight about him.

MATTHEWS: Well, I gave you my insight. It's not the way I would have voted. Tip was a party guy. I'm not. He would have defended a lot of things on behalf of Clinton. He would defend candidates he didn't like. He would never let you know what he really felt about these people. He had a line about abortion: "Well, of course we think it's murder, but we can't stop it." *(laughs)* Figure that one out. That's impossible to get through. "Of course, we think it's murder"—that puts it in kind of a sectarian mode, kind of an objective reality, grounded in church teaching. That protects him from other believers.

During impeachment, the Democrats were not there as lie detectors. They were there to vote with the discipline of the British Labour Party.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TAE: So what's your own political ideology?
MATTHEWS: I have a pretty conservative gut on a lot of things, but I can talk myself into a liberal position because I think it's the right thing. On affirmative action, I'll find a way where I'll fight my conservative gut because I think you have to make certain allowances and judgments. On the show, I tend to follow my gut. Winston Churchill said your gut tends to be anti-left.
TAE: Who is the most impressive candidate in the GOP presidential field?
MATTHEWS: The best organized is Pat Buchanan. He has his message figured out, knows what he has to say, and answers questions with authority and compassion. I don't recognize the strong clarity of message from the others yet.
TAE: Elizabeth Dole is very cautious when it comes to talking to the media. Do you think she will appear on "Hardball"?
MATTHEWS: Her husband enjoyed doing the show, and I know they both watch it. So I expect she'll do it in her own good time. My goal with questions is not so much to throw hard pitches past a guest as it is to disarm him by asking the surprising question. It doesn't have to be difficult, just different.
TAE: How is the new Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, handling his job?
MATTHEWS: I think it's strange to pick someone for that job who hasn't developed a tremendous amount of reverence through longevity. Speakers have to do their job based upon personal credibility, and Hastert has that. Even though Hastert is tied to Tom DeLay, he wasn't openly one of the tough guys. The Republicans wanted a regular person, and Hastert represents a clean approach.
TAE: Hastert seems to have taken a very low profile in his approach to the job. One doesn't see him hustling to get on all the Sunday talk shows.
MATTHEWS: And I salute that very much. The Speaker must first of all be a Speaker inside, and only then a Speaker on the outside. Newt Gingrich made his biggest mistake by holding daily press conferences on television: Every time something was going wrong in the world, he would be pinned with a question on that topic and be on TV that night, identified with it. Tip O'Neill would always have press conferences off-camera and without any radio recording equipment.
TAE: Did O'Neill enjoy doing TV interview programs?

Getting on the phone and making calls is an even harder part of journalism than writing. It takes juice to get on the phone, call strangers, and make things happen.

MATTHEWS: He saw no interest in working on Sunday. He never did any of the Sunday shows.
TAE: You said on "Hardball" that you believe Hillary Rodham Clinton's possible candidacy for the New York Senate seat is merely a stepping stone for something larger.
MATTHEWS: The only reason for her to run for the Senate is to eventually run for President. I have no idea whether she will, but I think if she wants to be President, that's the way to do it. I certainly don't think she's gotten any signals that Al Gore is going to put her on the ticket.
TAE: If you were writing *Hardball* this year, would you have to change all the chapters after watching how the Clintons operate?
MATTHEWS: I'll stick to those principles. The tough wisdom—"Keep your enemies in front of you," "Hang a lantern on your problems," "It's better to receive than to give"—is very Machiavellian. For example, "Hang a lantern on your problems" just means that a person ought to recognize that when he wants to achieve something, he brings strengths and weaknesses. He should use them both. Ronald Reagan was very successful in parlaying his Hollywood background to fit his own political success by always referring to it in a delightful way. He never said, "I'm sorry I'm an actor and not a lawyer." He always said, "You want to hear about what I did in Hollywood?" It was very powerful use of what a fool would call a handicap.
TAE: What about the one that goes "A man's word is his bond"? Has Clinton changed that?
MATTHEWS: People by four to one don't believe his word. They do accept the fact that he has been successful at delivering what he promised the people—good economic times—but his relationship with the Hill and the press will always bother him because he's earned their distrust. I think personal trust is very important, which is why I don't think Clinton will leave much of a legacy.
TAE: In *Hardball,* you write about how when LBJ was talking to someone, that person was convinced Johnson thought his concern was the most important thing in the whole world. Since that book was published in 1988, the same thing has been said many times about Bill Clinton.
MATTHEWS: People say that his ability to do what LBJ did fades with each meeting. But I've felt it. My wife and I were over at the White House at Christmas. It's unbelievable: he's direct and focused, warm and charming.
TAE: Speaking of honesty, you said on your TV show that the only people who seem to get

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in trouble in Washington are those who tell the truth.

MATTHEWS: That's always been true. You don't get in trouble in Washington for telling a lie. People here are paid to flack. People flack all the time. Nobody's ever been fired for hypocrisy. What gets a person in trouble isn't just the bad joke, it's the candid comment.

TAE: What did the country gain from the Senate impeachment trial?

MATTHEWS: People could see who the Senators really were. Patrick Leahy, Robert Torricelli, and Tom Harkin—they were speaking from a daily printout. Harkin would throw in that old liberalism. It was almost like he was preaching, like Hubert Humphrey. It was a white kind of church cadence, trying to imitate a black church cadence. Nobody talks like that. The ones who didn't talk are the ones I respect. Dianne Feinstein was desperately trying to find the center, and Pat Moynihan was recognizing the awfulness of the situation. But I guess he looked at it and said, "If I want to have any influence in New York in the future, I have to vote with the party." The Democrats were not there as lie detectors. They were there to vote with the discipline of the British Labour Party.

TAE: Some of the left-of-center journalists who've been critical of Clinton—you, Michael Kelly, Cokie Roberts, Maureen Dowd—have religious, usually Catholic, backgrounds.

MATTHEWS: That's true.

TAE: So is being raised Catholic a factor?

MATTHEWS: Well, it's not just religious. It's cultural. It has to do with metaphysics, philosophy, and ethics: It's who you *are*. I think it's a belief in honesty, that truth matters. No matter how much Irish Catholics may enjoy the day, I think we do see life as a vale of tears. We look upon everything with a certain dispassionate distance. *Things* are not interesting to the Irish Catholic. Land, maybe, but not things such as cars and toys. But there is a sense of status that's important. The presidency is revered. So as a group, we're probably very reverential toward the office and the truth. I have no problem with that association; I like all those people.

TAE: What's your view on the sex part?

MATTHEWS: I don't care about the lifestyle of big rock stars. These guys who are my age and have 20-year-old girlfriends, that comes with being in Hollywood. Wilt Chamberlain? I don't care. But the presidency is housed by the American people in reverence. When the British came they burned the White House for a reason. It was a symbol of the personhood of the President. I don't see it as a job that's just nine to five, and then he goes back to some apartment. It's never been that kind of a position. It's a moral office, and it carries moral authority. The presidency has very few powers, except the power of moral leadership.

Nixon never ended up spending any time with the people who loved him. Instead, he retired to New York City. He never really liked his troops.

TAE: So has Clinton lost his moral authority to be an effective President?

MATTHEWS: On certain issues, I think this President has a big problem with authority. How can anyone say that Kennedy, when he made his speech for civil rights in June of 1963—"We are confronted with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution"—wasn't issuing a moral dictum from the White House? Of all the people, the liberals should be the last to say that the presidency doesn't carry moral authority.

TAE: You've also written a book about John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon called *Kennedy and Nixon: The Rivalry That Shaped Postwar America.* How do you personally deal with the continuing revelations about JFK's private recklessness?

MATTHEWS: My view of Jack Kennedy is that I really liked the guy. I base that on listening to hours and hours of these latest tapes of him actually running the White House. He ran the U.S. government, and you can hear him doing it. A real hard-working, tough, profane, serious person trying to run the U.S. government—and keep himself above things politically. He was a really good, tough guy who any fellow would like.

TAE: But how about the way he lived his life?

MATTHEWS: I want to say something for a minute. He didn't like Communists; he hated deprivation of freedom. He saw Castro as the man trying to sell the keys of this continent to the Communists. And JFK didn't have any sympathy for all these people who had been Stalinists in the '40s and '50s. These were writers who wrote about individualism and romance—and they're arguing for collectivism? What did they expect that they would be, the guardians of the state, and that they'd have a free life above the sweat of the poor who were locked in chains? Kennedy saw the evil of communism. To him, it was never complicated; it was Manichaean.

TAE: But Alger Hiss and Lillian Hellman were for years icons to many on the left.

MATTHEWS: JFK had that wonderful line in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the West Berlin speech where he said, "There are many people in the world who really don't understand, or say they don't, what is the great issue between the free world and the Communist world." There are still some to this day who cannot handle the nature of that struggle. But what else about Kennedy—the mob? Obviously that's on the record. It was a very strange, complicated relationship among his people. I know there's a connection there. But getting rid of Castro was the goal.

TAE: In *Kennedy and Nixon,* you write that Nixon lacked any charm, so he made his "regularness" a virtue. He was the champion of the squares. People, you say, recognized the five o'clock shadow of Richard Nixon in their bathroom mirror.

MATTHEWS: Yes, but it's curious how Nixon never ended up spending any time with the people who loved him. In his 20 years of retirement, how come he never went to Columbus or Omaha or San Diego to spend an evening with a hundred of those people? Instead, he went to the bohemian grove in New York City. It was a real problem with him. He never really liked his troops. That's strange for a man who was on the national ticket in every presidential election but one from 1952 to 1972. He was a part of everybody's life; almost everybody voted for him once. And he never showed any kind of gratitude. But go out to the Nixon library today, and those supporters are still out there, touring the place.

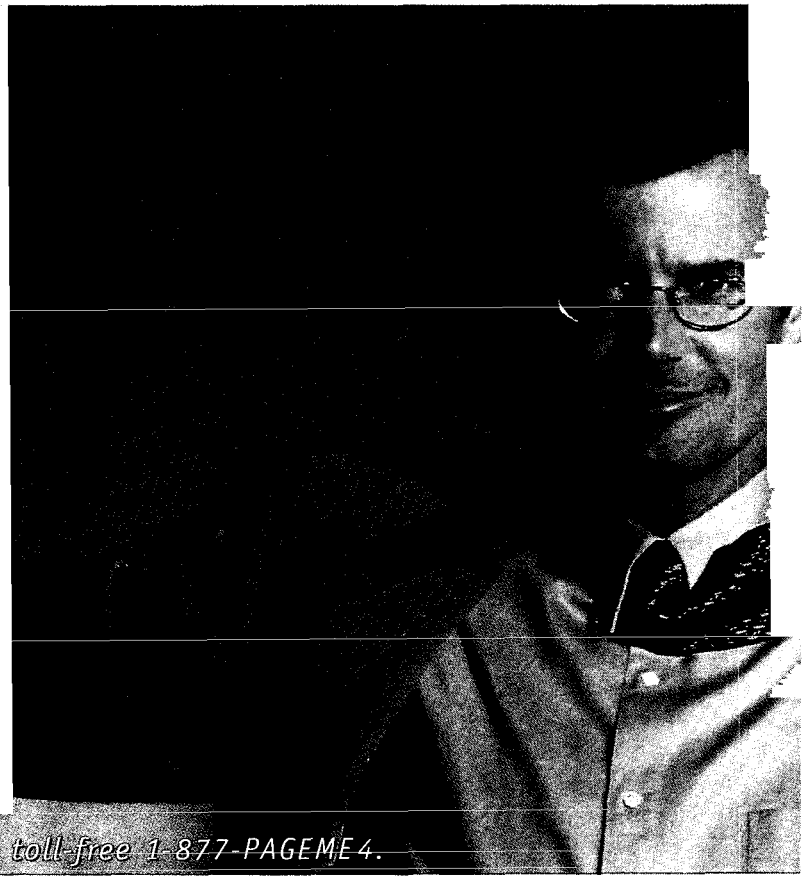
TAE: Speaking of the Cold War, the writer Christopher Buckley says the controversy between Christopher Hitchens and Sidney Blumenthal over White House smears that Monica Lewinsky was a stalker is the Whittaker Chambers-Alger Hiss case for your generation.

MATTHEWS: If that's so then there's no doubt that the hero will be Hitchens because he's telling the truth. But it's not a question of a Communist threat. Instead, it's this: Did Sid Blumenthal ever try to sell the Clinton cover story? He clearly did. I know he did.

TAE: Did he try to sell it to you?

MATTHEWS: No, he didn't, thank God. But I know he did because I was at a social event where he was doing it. I think he's always been a true believer in Clinton and is willing to believe just about anything the President tells him. My feeling is, if Sid is proud of his political behavior on behalf of the President, he ought to get out and explain it. He shouldn't hide.

TAE: After the Clinton administration, will Blumenthal be a panelist on "Hardball"?



ROUND-TRIP WINGS. *Introducing the Motorola PageWriter.™ A smart pager that lets you send and receive word messages. Smart enough to allow you to communicate with anyone who has an Internet email address or fax. A full keyboard makes*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MATTHEWS: He'd be a good spokesman for Clinton, but I'm not sure he can distinguish between that and advocacy journalism. An advocate can defend a person's position, but he's not a flack. A flack is someone who defends his boss no matter what he says or does. In other words, a flack is a serf. Like Lanny Davis is a serf, and he's not even on the payroll. Clinton is probably the least grateful prince for this kind of service.

TAE: Did you believe Juanita Broaddrick when she claimed Clinton raped her?

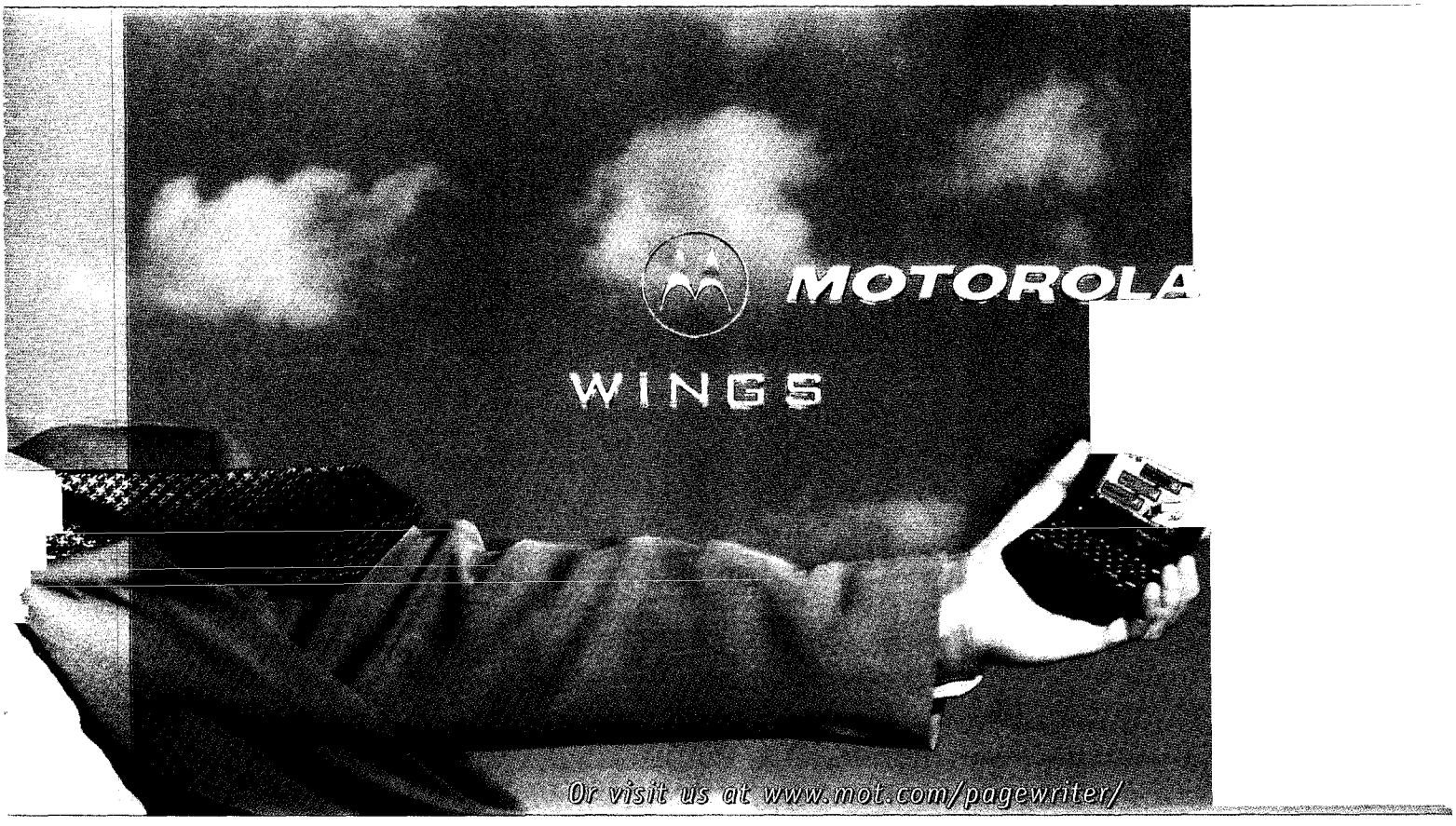
MATTHEWS: I think the manner in which the White House handled it is telling. It's going to be one of the things that settles in when people think of who Bill Clinton really is, and that's where it's going to rest.

TAE: What's your opinion of this phrase "sexual McCarthyism"?

MATTHEWS: It sounds like a title for a book. The problem most people have with this President isn't sex—it's the manner in which he deals with the truth. I think that's always been the issue. There's a profound lack of interest in Bill Clinton's private life—whether he likes to play golf, smoke cigars, or hang out with Vernon Jordan. He's not a John Kennedy or even a Barry Goldwater. He's not the sort of person we'll want to hear from when he leaves the White House. We won't be waiting to catch his latest op-ed article in the *New York Times*—it's hard to imagine him writing one. I guess he's going to end up being the Roger Maris of American politics: He'll be in the record books, but there won't be much interest in his personality. He's not Mickey Mantle.

TAE: So how should Clinton have been punished?

MATTHEWS: Maybe it wasn't through the constitutional process. Perhaps it was simply to say, "He must live somewhere else. He disgraced this place, and will not disgrace it again." Just put him up in an apartment on Connecticut Avenue. That might be too baroque, but it would have exquisite justice to it.

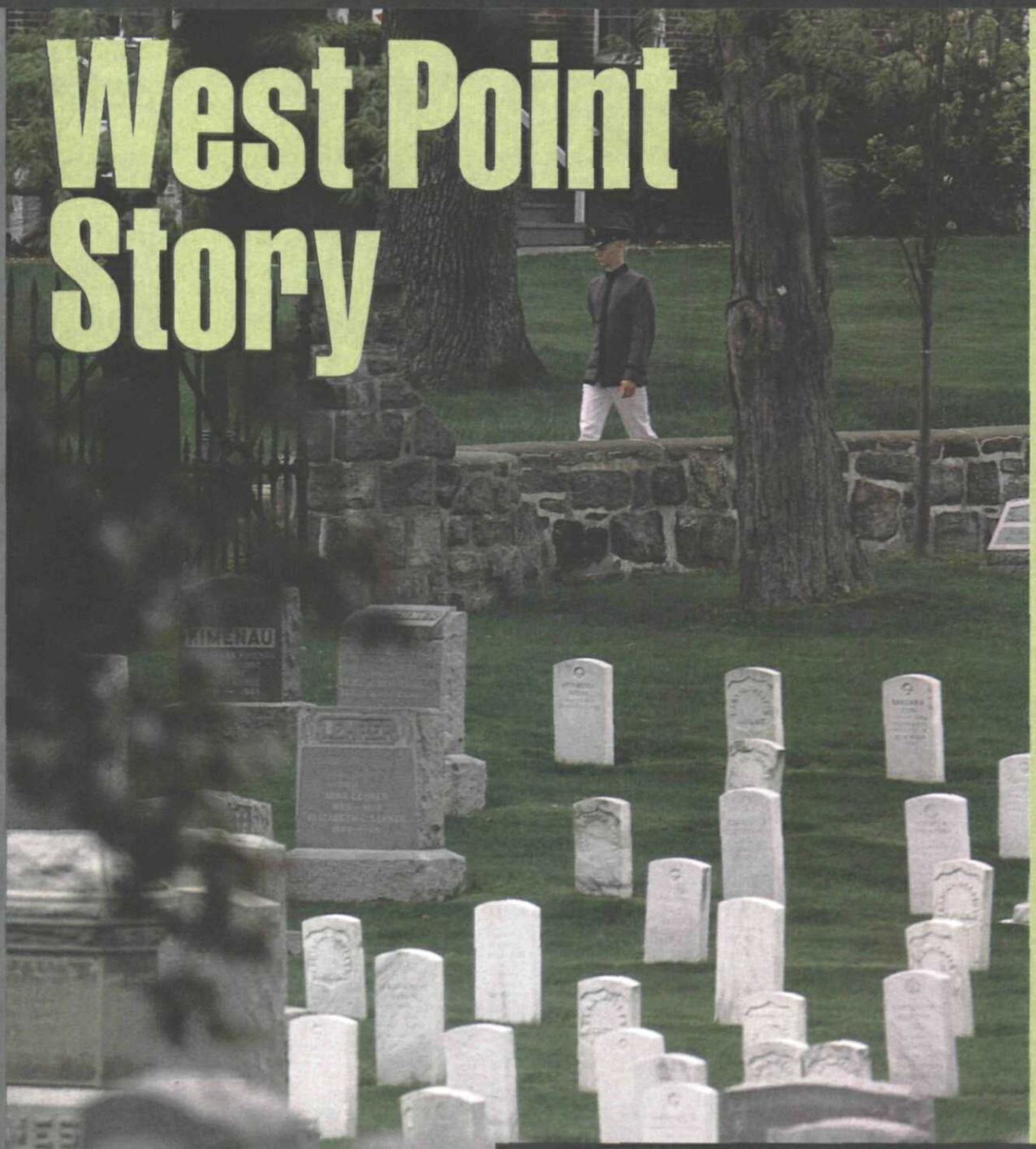


it easy to create messages on the go, sending productivity to new heights. It may be the most private form of two-way communication to come along. So discreet, so powerful, you can control your world from the palm of your hand. Motorola gives you Wings. And Wings set you free.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE

West Point Story

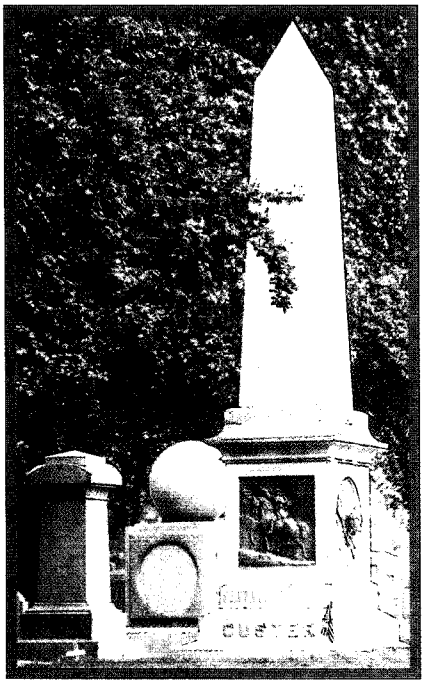


"This is a very sentimental place," says Colonel Charles F. Brower, IV (Class of 1969), professor and head of the Behavioral Sciences and Leadership Department at West Point. "It's hard to figure that out, but things have profound meaning when they're built upon so much experience and tradition." • Over six months I asked dozens of West Pointers, "What is your favorite spot?" on these 16,000 acres. The largest number answered "the cemetery," and most of them did so with a halt, a swallow, a dab at the eyes. No matter if our chat had been starchy or informal, acronym-clotted or fluid: mere mention of the West Point Cemetery carried an emotional charge like a bolt off nearby Storm King Mountain.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The dead (7,000) outnumber the cadets (4,000) at West Point. Pennies and pebbles rest on the grave markers: tokens of remembrance, many left by strangers, for the families of the departed are often far away. As if sent by central casting, deer lope past the white headstones at dusk. Some of the inhumed died in war (George Armstrong Custer, tourist favorite), others in peace (Army coach Red Blaik, whose football-shaped stone bears the legend, "On Brave Old Army Team"), one on the launching pad (Ed White, who was incinerated aboard Apollo 1). But just as all lie under West Point, in the end their loyalties lie with West Point.

What is it about the U.S. Military Academy that inspires fealty unto the grave? Its business, after all, is death. It can be "a place of bleak emotions, a great orphanage, chill in its appearance, rigid in its demands. There was occasional kindness but little love," as writer James Salter (W.P. 1945) recalls. Yet he adds, "In its place was comradeship and a standard that seemed as high as anyone could know. It included self-reliance and death if need be. West Point did not make character, it extolled it. It taught one to believe in difficulty, the hard way, and to sleep, as it were, on bare ground."


Philip Kamrass

I came to West Point not with starry eyes but with a suspicious mind, as the song goes. I expected a grey, unrelievedly martial world. That is not what I found. (Indeed, at my first stop, the West Point Club restaurant, I was serenaded in the men's room by the piped-in sounds not of Wagner or Sousa but of Michael Bolton and James Taylor—which made me, at least, want to kill kill kill.)

There is, inevitably, a Potemkin-village quality to any tour of what is, after all, a military installation and government operation. The Public Affairs Office was exceptionally cooperative over the many months of this story's gestation, but even our heroically indefatigable guide, Deb DeGraw, could not comply with a request to meet with "disgruntled cadets." We saw, for the most part, the best West Point has to offer. But one need not be a worshiper at the Church of the Pentagon to appreciate the Academy's virtues, notably an honor code that demands truthfulness in our age of Big Lies.

Philosophy professor Louis Pojman is, at first glance, an unlikely defender of West Point. He is no Sergeant Stryker or military wannabe who gets weak-kneed at the sight of a man in a uniform. "You might say I've been a convert to West Point," he says. Pojman has led the peripatetic life typical of an academic (or a soldier) and has found amidst the Gothic Gray "a kind of idealistic commitment that reminds me of Notre Dame. I've seen so much debauchery and decadence at American colleges; this is really an oasis. There are few academic settings where character and moral values are taken so seriously, where discipline and integrity are valued as highly, where young people are learning to accept stress in their youth. If our nation is to survive its shallow hedonism, it will be because of training like that of West Point." (This, mind you, from the green-ish author of the standard text *Environmental Ethics.*)

For its first century of existence, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point was an institution both revered and reviled. It produced Robert E. Lee, who never collected a single demerit during his four years and went on to serve as its superintendent, and Ulysses S. Grant, who said the happiest day of his life was "the day I left West Point." The Academy is credited with preserving the Union and with destroying the Founders' ideal of a citizen-army. Abolition of the Academy was a live issue in Congress until the twentieth century, when world wars made heroes and celebrities of West Pointers like Douglas MacArthur (1903), Dwight Eisenhower ('15), and Omar Bradley ('15).

Gradually, West Point became enveloped in a romantic haze: It was a place of dashing cadets, of smart parades across the Plain, of Saturday football games along a resplendent Hudson River. Young boys devoured Red Reeder's novels of cadet life; reverential movies were made, from *The Long Gray Line* to the ineffable *West Point Story* (1950), in which James Cagney and Virginia Mayo dance and wisecrack their way into the hearts of some really swell cadets.

Then came Vietnam. Linebacker-halfback Sam Bartholomew ('66) remembers the war's first obvious impact on the Academy as comical: "The football team had the 'Chinese bandits'—defensive specialists. Whenever the bandits would go in the cadets would put on coolie hats," until the Secretaries of the Army and Defense banished the coolies and their Commie imagery.

But as the war expanded, West Point grew grimmer. Graduates were coming home as corpses. Thirty of Bartholomew's classmates died in Southeast Asia; more than 100 were wounded.

The cadet buzz-cut became the symbol of a myrmidon who was willing to kill and die for Robert McNamara and Lyndon Johnson. Current Commandant John Abizaid ('73) bitterly recalls going to Boston College for a football game and "being saluted with 'Sieg Heil.'" West Point lost its allure; the once-choosy Academy had to admit every single qualified applicant to fill the entering class in 1968.

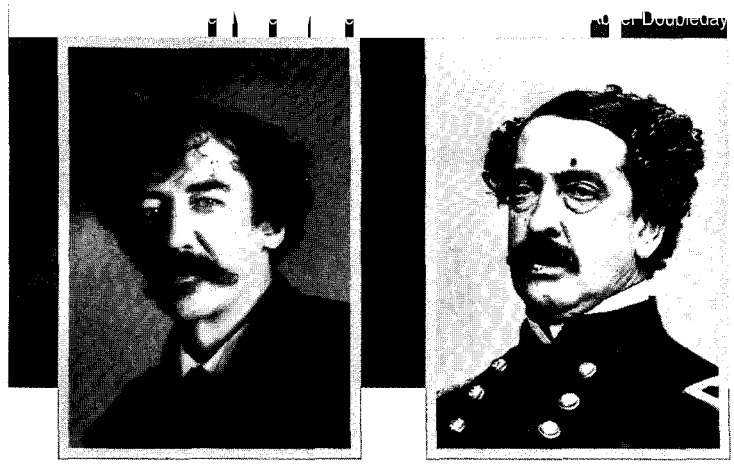
The Academy has recovered nicely. Once more it is among the nation's best math and engineering schools. The cadets are top-notch, their leaders are impressive men, hazing is *verboten,* no one ever skips class, and the cadets call you "sir" whether they mean it or not. Yet in some respects, this is not the West Point of MacArthur and Eisenhower, let alone Lee. Although all graduates receive a B.S., English majors roam the grounds. Women parade across the Plain—and live in the co-ed barracks. For $300

TAE *associate editor Bill Kauffman is the author of four books, most recently* With Good Intentions? Reflections on the Myth of Progress in America.

BY BILL KAUFFMAN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

million a year, West Point graduates 900 second lieutenants every May, and as the USMA approaches its bicentennial in 2002, we ought to ask again the most fundamental questions: What is West Point? And *why* is West Point?



Corbis/Hulton-Deutsch collection; Corbis

"SOMETHING LARGER THAN MYSELF"

"Of the river scenery of America, the Hudson, at West Point, is doubtless the boldest and most beautiful," said nineteenth-century poet Nathaniel Parker Willis. The British coveted this strategically vital bend in the Hudson; had they captured the batteries at West Point they could have severed the link between New York City and the interior of the country—a severance that might have pleased some later Americans, but that would have disrupted communications and supplies during the Revolution, perhaps dooming the cause of independence.

As early as 1776 the Continental Congress debated the creation of a "Military Academy for the Army," so that we would not have to rely on foreign engineers in the unlikely event of future wars. In 1782 a "Corps of Invalids"—surely a name to frighten off potential aggressors!—was established at West Point whereby lame veterans would teach mathematics to younger officers.

Henry Knox and Alexander Hamilton convinced George Washington of the necessity for a national military academy; two days before his death at Mount Vernon, the ex-President took quill in hand and endorsed "a Military Academy" as being "of primary importance to this country."

Hamilton's arch-foe, Thomas Jefferson, had opposed such an academy on the grounds that it was "unauthorized by the Constitution." As was so often the case, President Jefferson disagreed with citizen Jefferson, and in March 1802, he signed into law the legislation creating the United States Military Academy. The institution was a ramshackle affair for 15 years. In 1812, the corps consisted of a single cadet, for Jeffersonians led by Secretary of War William Eustis stinted the Academy on grounds of parsimony in government and a belief in the citizen militia as opposed to the dreaded standing army.

A humorless New England autocrat named Sylvanus Thayer, the thirty-third cadet to be graduated from West Point, saved the Academy when he was appointed Superintendent in 1817. Thayer instituted summer encampments, which persist to this day, as well as daily grading, the ranking of cadets, and rules so strict as to invite disbelief, if not open rebellion: Cadets were not permitted to read novels, play musical instruments, possess cooking utensils, or send unauthorized letters to loved ones. Thayer also turned West Point into the best engineering and science school in the country—and, in ways not much acknowledged anymore, fundamentally altered the Academy's mission.

For as Stephen Ambrose wrote in his standard history, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point*, "Graduates of the Academy would not even be expected to remain in the Army, where there probably would be no room for them in any case, but they were expected upon their return to civil life to join the local militia company and direct its training and, in war, its fighting." Thus the Academy was intended to reinforce the militia system and not become the heart and mind of a permanent army. Yet by 1838 Congress had imposed an obligation of four years' service on graduating cadets, and it has fluctuated thereabouts ever since.

Abolition of the Academy was hotly debated in the 1830s and 1840s. (Congressman Davy Crockett called it "not only aristocratic, but a downright invasion of the rights of the citizen, and a violation of the civil compact called 'the Constitution.'") But the Mexican War saved its bacon, as several graduates performed with distinction.

Although three-quarters of the West Point grads who fought in the Civil War wore the Union blue, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was of the class of 1828, and the Confederate generalship was dominated by USMA products. Senate Republicans took up where Crockett had left off: Senator Chandler of Michigan demanded abolition of this viper's nest that had produced more traitors "within the last 50 years than all the institutions of learning and education that have existed since Judas Iscariot's time." Moreover, Northern West Point generals like George McClellan (1846) seemed shy of carnage; one Republican politician charged that the Union army was riddled with "scores of luke warm, half secession [West Point] officers in command who cannot bear to strike a vigorous blow lest it hurt their rebel friends or jeopardize the precious protectors of slavery."

William Faulkner once said that in the South, the past not only isn't forgotten—it isn't even past. At no American school is the past so present as at West Point. (Faulkner's visit to the Academy in 1962 was one of his last public appearances. "I had the layman's notion that this was a stiff, regimented place where robots move to numbers," he said, "and I've found it's a little different.") Cadets are made to understand that they are part of the Long Gray Line, which stretches back into a misty past and ahead to an unknowable future; from the halls of Sylvanus Thayer to the shores of West Africa. "Much of the history we teach was made by people we taught," is a point of pride at the Academy; West Pointers commanded both sides in 55 of the 60 major battles of the Civil War and supplied 89 of 155 U.S. ground commanders during the Second World War.

It would be a dull cadet indeed who could walk these grounds for four days, let alone four years, and not get the message: We Produce Great Men. West Point's baseball team plays at Doubleday Field, named for Abner Doubleday (1842), who in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Corbis; Corbis/Bettman;Corbis/Hulton-Deutsch collection; AP Photos

legend if not fact invented baseball. The grounds are dotted with cannon, festooned with regimental flags, decorated with statuary reminders of wars past. George S. Patton faces the library—an in-joke, for legend has it he scarcely visited the place during his five years as a cadet. ("Pa I am stupid there is no use talking I am stupid," he wrote his father.)

Most of the buildings were constructed at the dawn of the twentieth century; they are gray and forbidding, neo-Gothic monuments with a gargoyle here and there, perhaps as homage to the Hudson's venerable reputation as host of goblins and headless Hessians. Though the design has been called "grimly purposeful," there is a spooky, eldritch quality, and it is no surprise that Ralph Adams Cram, namesake of the architecture firm responsible for most of the structures, was a master of the ghost story.

Ritual and tradition animate (critics say "deaden") every aspect of West Point, from R-Day, when parents transfer more than 1,100 sons and daughters to the USMA and watch them—heads shorn, posture erect—parade at sunset, to graduation day, when the 900 or so survivors will toss their white hats into the sky at Michie Stadium, and hundreds of children scramble after the prizes (cadets often hide pictures, dollar bills, and charms inside). The sight of a cadet pushing a child in a wheelchair in pursuit of a hat—and the child's delight at its possession—could make the curmudgeon H. L. Mencken bawl. Proud parents beam, yet there is a hint of sadness in the air, for their children are gone now for five more years, scattered around the globe, in their new family, the U.S. Army, and "home" will be a series of temporary bases.

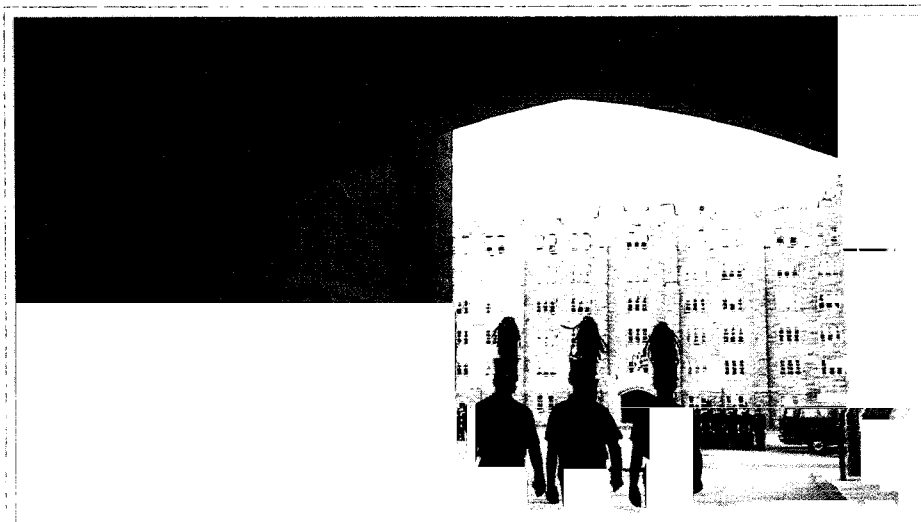
It is ceremony, plus the shared tribulations that grow harsher with each retelling at alumni gatherings, that imbues cadets with a lifelong attachment to a place of gray walls and bitter Februaries. The Saturday morning parades in the fall, three hours before kickoff time, stir the hearts of visitors and annoy the sleep-deprived cadets, who respond by cracking jokes in the ranks and passing along the coordinates of comely spectators. But the stiff dignity of a march serves a purpose. Novelist Ed Ruggero (1980) told me, "I was in the fourth regiment, the last to leave the parade field.... By the time we passed in front of the Superintendent's reviewing stand the band was playing, 'The Army Song.' Looking through the files of bayonets and rifles ahead of me, I could see the Supe's house, the dark trees in the garden, the hills beyond. It was always on that stretch that I felt most distinctly that I was part of something larger than myself, something worth belonging to."

A note on West Point argot and hierarchy is in order. Freshmen are plebes, sophomores are yearlings, juniors are cows, and seniors are firsties. The Superintendent, or Supe (currently Lieutenant General Daniel W. Christman) runs the place; the Commandant of Cadets (Brigadier General John P. Abizaid) is in charge of the student-soldiers, particularly their military training. The Dean of the Academic Board (Brigadier General Fletcher M. Lamkin, Jr.) rules the academic roost.

Superintendent Christman, who graduated first in the class of 1965, lives in the 1820 federal-style home of Sylvanus Thayer, a football's throw from the cadet barracks. ("It's like living in a two-room apartment attached to a museum," he says, with the papers and furniture and bric-a-brac of former occupants like Robert E. Lee and Douglas MacArthur.) Superintendent has become a "career job"—next stop, Retirement Village—for three-star generals who serve here for five years, on the theory that this positioning elevates them above petty service politics.

Superintendent Christman is popular with the cadets; despite expanding military training, he is regarded as something of a liberalizer, though nowhere near as thoroughgoing as the greatest liberalizer in the Academy's history, Douglas MacArthur, who, with memories of the merciless hazing he

Philip Kamrass



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

took in his plebe year, became Superintendent in 1919 and proceeded to broaden course offerings, bring in civilian professors, codify the honor system, greatly expand the sports program, and break down the utter isolation of the cadets, who were permitted more leaves and more mail.

The Superintendent's office is lined with portraits of his predecessors, including MacArthur, who delivered his "Duty, Honor, Country" valediction in May 1962 to a mess hall assemblage that included a plebe from Ohio named Daniel Christman. ("Today marks my final roll call with you," MacArthur told the hushed cadets. "But I want you to know that when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the corps, and the corps, and the corps." MacArthur's wife, almost alone among auditors, was unmoved, but as she explained, "This is the twenty-ninth time I've heard it.")

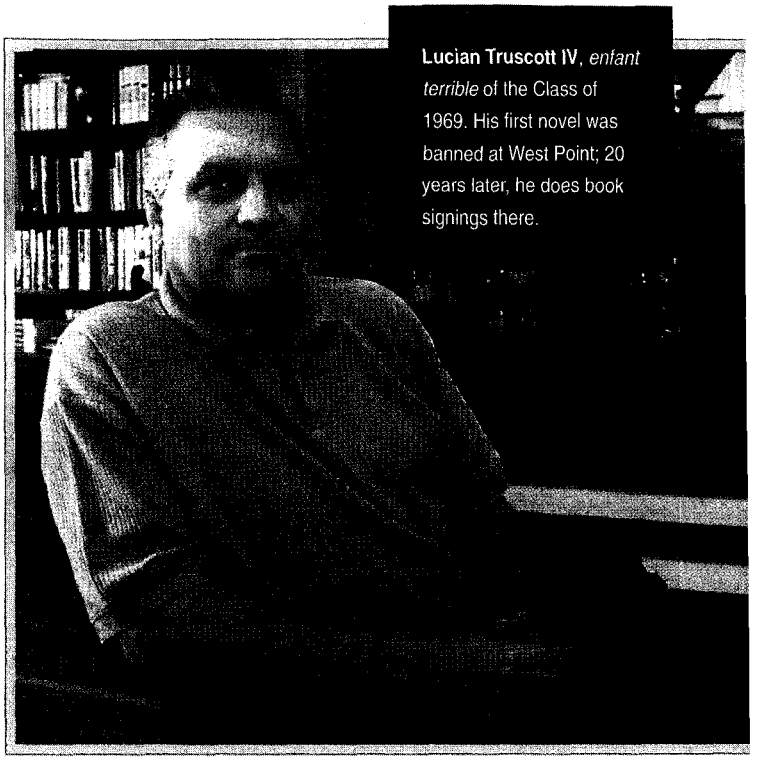
There's an old gag that says, "West Point enjoys two centuries of tradition untouched by progress," but that's a lie. The Academy is sensitive to changes in U.S. foreign policy. MacArthur told the cadets, "Your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable—it is to win our wars." Yet Christman now explains that "We define wars much more broadly than MacArthur ever envisioned. Our mission is to win at any operation: restoring power in Dade County, Florida, if we're asked to do that, or killing Iraq's Republican Guard, if necessary." The curriculum has mutated in response to Kuwait, Somalia, Serbia, et al. "We've moved away from an emphasis on Western European Judeo-Christian history," says the Superintendent. "We're teaching a lot more about Islamic history, Arabic and Chinese, understanding Africa and South Asia." For one never knows where next the armed forces of peacekeeping will alight. (Professor Pojman is dedicating his next book to his cadets—"who will give new significance to the green uniform"—the implication being that West Point is training tomorrow's officers for a military of pollution-fighters.)

No one better personifies the changes at West Point than Lucian Truscott IV, *enfant terrible* of the Class of 1969. His first novel, *Dress Gray*, in which a maverick cadet, Ry Slaight, takes on a villainous commandant in trying to discover the murderer of a gay cadet, was banned at West Point; 20 years later, he does book signings here.

Truscott is the son of a West Pointer, grandson of the man who commanded the Allied landing at Anzio, and a descendant of Thomas Jefferson. (He'll be buried with his family at Monticello.) He was a refractory cadet who accumulated demerits the way kids collect baseball cards. His writing career began as a sophomore, with a letter to the *Village Voice* that read, "Abbie Hoffman's an idiot." He graduated 658th in his class and was drummed out of the Army after one year.

In *Dress Gray*, a character tells Ry Slaight, "Some day, this place is going to change. It won't happen while you and I are here, but we'll see it in our lifetime. You can count on that."

Well, change did come, and it is reflected in Truscott's sequel, *Full Dress Gray* (1998). Ry Slaight, who quit the Academy at the end of *Dress Gray*, is back—as Superintendent of a multicultural West Point at which he is "charged with defending that which he had once challenged with such vehemence." The novel succeeds as a page-turner, despite its cartoon villains—the two



AP/Wide World Photos

Lucian Truscott IV, *enfant terrible* of the Class of 1969. His first novel was banned at West Point; 20 years later, he does book signings there.

bad guys are scions of a "tobacco-farming family" and "the Nassau County Republican machine." But what is fascinating about *Full Dress Gray* is the extent to which Truscott has now fully embraced an institution at which he was about as *persona non grata* as you can get.

Dress Gray reads as if written by a radical democrat of the early nineteenth century—a Davy Crockett who questions the very need for West Point. *Full Dress Gray*, despite the sinister machinations of an evil commandant and his cadet henchmen, is a virtual valentine to the Long Gray Line. "One of the great ironies of my life is that...I end up being a defender" of West Point, says Truscott. Asked what he would reform about the place, he replies, "I wouldn't do anything different than what Superintendent Christman is doing right now."

Truscott returned last summer to a welcome fit for a prodigal son, supping on the fatted calf at the Supe's house. General Christman says, "I devoured *Full Dress Gray*. And having read his cybertraffic on the West Point Forum, I found myself agreeing an awful lot with what he said." Dean Lamkin says of Truscott that, "In his heart of hearts he's a patriot and believes in this institution." As, indeed, he does. Truscott doubts he'd have graduated from any other school: "If I'd gone to Berkeley I'd have flunked out in six months for chasing hippie chicks. West Point probably is the only place I could have graduated from, because it *made* you have discipline—and in those days I was rather lacking in the discipline category."

"YOU BROUGHT NOTHING INSIDE EXCEPT YOURSELF"

Before a contumacious teenager can be turned into a disciplined, tradition-minded cadet, he or she must be admitted to West Point, which since 1843 has operated an official quota system, through which appointments to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The question that West Point has asked (and answered differently every few years) since 1802: What is the proper balance between regimentation and liberty?

Academy are primarily allotted by states and congressional districts. About three-fourths of the 1,200 new cadets each year have been nominated by a member of the House or Senate; the other places are reserved for soldiers from the regular Army, sons and daughters of career soldiers, and other military-connected candidates. "Most people think your mom or dad has to make a contribution to your member of Congress, and that's absolutely not true," assures Director of Admissions Colonel Michael L. Jones (1970).

The cadet profile is a guidance counselor's dream. For the class of 2001, the mean SAT scores are 620 verbal and 644 math; 90 percent earned varsity letters, and almost two-thirds, remarkably, were team captains. Ruggero the novelist writes, "While West Point attracted some of the brightest students in America, they were not the same kids who would have gone to Harvard or MIT. They were the kind of students who did well at Penn State and the University of Texas."

A knack for trigonometry is not enough. The admissions department rank orders candidates by a "whole candidate score," which also takes into account "leadership skills" and performance on a physical aptitude exam, which includes pull-ups, a standing long jump, a basketball throw, and other feats beyond the ability of your typical MIT geek. Physical standards are lower for female applicants.

In May 1998, the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Equal Opportunity released a study showing "a substantial academic qualifications gap between black and white applicants who have been accepted for future enrollment" at West Point. Using data from the incoming plebe class in the fall of 1995, the CEO found that white admittees outscored black admittees by an average of 40 points on verbal SATs and 60 points on math SATs.

Academy officials replied with the usual boilerplate about "diversity" and the ever-useful "problems with methodology," but they need not have been defensive: After all, West Point is based on a quota system, albeit one with a geographical base.

Whatever leg up affirmative action gives blacks today at West Point is dwarfed by the preferences granted to southern and western whites in antebellum days, when young men from the interior of the country simply did not have access to the kind of education enjoyed by the sons of prosperous East Coast families. Throughout the nineteenth century, Superintendents begged Congress to tighten admission standards, to no avail, for the ingenious congressional appointment system was a rich source of patronage.

Besides, some of the unlettered turned out rather well: For instance, a Virginia country boy named Thomas J. Jackson, dressed in homespun, gained admission despite making it painfully clear that "he could add up a column of figures, but as to vulgar or decimal fractions, it is doubtful if he had ever heard of them," as a classmate said. The examining board admitted him, in an obvious case of affirmative action for hard-working crackers, and his diligence and native smarts soon made him one of the class of 1846's better students. (In the war that followed Thomas J. Jackson picked up the nickname "Stonewall," and now you know the rest of the story.)

The first black graduate of West Point, Henry Ossian Flipper (1877), declared, "If my manhood cannot stand without a governmental prop, then let it fall. If I am to stand on any other ground than the one white cadets stand upon, then I don't want the cadetship." Today, says Louis Pojman, the green-ish philosophy professor, "there's a little bit of affirmative action and the cadets hate it. When they see someone get pushed up because of her gender or because they need a black person, they talk. That's a demoralizer, but it doesn't happen much."

If nineteenth-century West Point had an aristocratic tincture, the current corps of cadets is largely middle class. "In this century our nobles have not encouraged their sons to go to West Point," notes Gore Vidal, who was born in the cadet hospital, son of West Point's star quarterback Gene Vidal (1918). The almost comically genteel nature of the haughty nineteenth-century cadet is illustrated by a story told of the painter James McNeill Whistler, who arrived in 1851 and left two years later, done in by his "unfortunate opinion that silicon was a gas." An instructor once reproved Whistler: "What! You do not know the date of the battle of Buena Vista? Suppose you were to go out to dinner and the company began to talk of the Mexican War, and you, a West Point man, were asked the date of the battle. What would you do?" "Do?" replied Whistler cooly. "Why, I should refuse to associate with people who could talk of such things at dinner!"

The Academy acts as a leveller. As a general explains in John P. Marquand's novel *Melville Goodwin, USA*, "you brought nothing inside there with you except yourself. Pocket money, family, and chauffeurs did not matter at the Point." In his critical *Ivory Fortress: A Psychiatrist Looks at West Point* (1974), former West Point shrink Richard U'Ren wrote of a gathering of cadets and parents: "One cadet's father, from Virginia, came dressed in a Brooks Brothers suit, while another's, from Louisiana, wore a blue bowling shirt: yet it was impossible to determine which cadet belonged to which father." Whether this is a refreshing obliteration of class distinctions or an appalling triumph of enforced sameness and dull uniformity is for each reader to decide.

THE BURDEN OF BEAST

New cadets arrive in late June, and if they are not feted at frat mixers and juice-bar receptions, they don't expect to be. "When I first came here, I had this idea that upperclassmen were going to be hitting me," laughs firstie Thurman McKenzie, a varsity track athlete.

They don't hit you anymore; instead, the teenaged newcomers are thrown into "Beast Barracks," the decidedly feral nickname for Cadet Basic Training. As Commandant of Cadets,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"If our nation is to survive its shallow hedonism, it will be because of training like that of West Point."

Cadet crawls under wire during a field training exercise.

Brigadier General John Abizaid is the commanding officer of the corps. Sturdily built and witty, Abizaid is described as a "soldier's soldier" by subordinates. "It's really funny to watch these guys come in here with their hats on backwards, and next thing you know we turn them into soldiers," Abizaid says as he shows me a video of Beast Barracks. (West Point is big on promotional videos set to incongruous rock music. In this one, new cadets are soldierized to the tune of "Takin' Care of Business," that classic '70s ode to idleness. Another video shows Pointers peacekeeping in Somalia to the strains of U2's "Where the Streets Have No Name.")

For six weeks, more than a thousand 18-year-olds will wake at 5:20 a.m. and spend their days running, rappelling, shining shoes, and studying their M-16s as though they were geometric theorems. When addressed by an upperclassman, they can say one of four things: Yes, sir; No, sir; Sir, I do not understand; or No excuse, sir. (Cadet Mattox of Los Angeles says that after plebe year, "I even began my prayers, 'Sir.'") New cadets are permitted one 10-minute call home each week. Televisions and other mass culture entertainment are not permitted. Between 4 and 9 percent will quit during Beast Barracks, and it's a long ride home, especially for dropouts from small towns, who are typically given a hero's sendoff when leaving for the Point.

Beast Barracks is largely cadet-run. New arrivals are divided into squads of ten; upperclassmen act as squad leaders in what is seen as a manufactory of leadership. Some are bullies, others want to to be everybody's pal; some inspire, others berate. But the grant of responsibility usually does its job: junior Bryce Bowman of suburban Buffalo, New York, says that being a squad leader was the experience that made him feel finally, fully, part of the Long Gray Line.

The new cadets do almost everything, right down to shoeshining, as a team. "Cooperate and graduate" goes one adage, for as former English professor Pat C. Hoy says, "Few believe they can make it alone. Those who try usually fail. A lone rifleman does not wage war and win." (Hoy, who went on to teach at Harvard, lamented, "at Harvard, where I see so few signs of restraint, I'm yearning for the gifts of community. At West Point I had yearned for freedom and solitude.")

Those who have endured Beast Barracks describe it best. "It's an initiation far harder than Army basic training," according to General Norman Schwarzkopf (1956), "designed to drive out those plebes who can't handle physical and psychological stress, and teach the survivors the discipline and basic skills they need to get along at West Point."

Separated from family, friends, and hometown, the fledgling passes through this summer crucible and emerges a West Point cadet. Something has been gained—and lost, as well. As critic U'Ren writes, "Since cooperation and discipline are esteemed so highly in the military, individualism and self-reliance—the old civilian virtues—must be ruthlessly expunged." Colonel Kerry Pierce, director of the Office of Policy Planning and Analysis, stresses that cadets must learn that "the group is more important than the individual," and as this is at odds with the dominant American ethos, it belies the hackneyed claim that West Point is "quintessentially American." It is not—for better and/or for worse.

Beast Barracks is prominent in West Point lore not only for the ingenuity of the hazing—forcing the newcomers to drink Tabasco sauce and toothpaste, stand at attention on their heads, warm toilet seats for upperclassmen, and other wholesome hijinks now largely banished—but for its "West Pointicization": Memorizing old football scores, Academy facts, and, most colorfully, bizarre definitions. "How's the cow?" upperclassmen ask the lowly plebe, to which he responds, "Sir, she walks, she talks, she's full of chalk, the lacteal fluid extracted from the female of the bovine species is highly prolific to the *n*th degree."

Irreverence is not among the qualities contributing to an applicant's whole candidate score, but it ought to be. A long-standing joke (updated every few years for inflation) has it that West Point is a "$250,000 education, shoved up your anatomy a nickel at a time." Upperclassmen are nigh unanimous in proclaiming a sense of humor as the *sine qua non* of a successful plebe year. The healthiest way to deal with a picayune regulation—besides quitting—is to obey and have a good laugh later. "I remember making it back to my room, closing the door, and laughing so hard" at the absurdity of it all, says one junior. Then he fell asleep, woke up before sunrise the next morning, and did it all over again.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Non-sadistic hazing has a purpose beyond cruelty. "There's a tendency, when you're 18 years old, in a new environment, and people are yelling at you, to just want to give up," notes Lucian Truscott. "My experience was you didn't get guys to not give up by being nice to them. They learn they can endure pretty much anything—that's why they don't give up." Nonetheless, the cruder forms of hazing have largely vanished—one of the Academy's ubiquitous "mission statements" declares that instilling "sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others" is a purpose of Beast Barracks. Today's regimen, however, is perhaps more demanding than in Tabasco-guzzling days. That old spoilsport Commandant Abizaid has de-emphasized fraternity froth and rededicated Beast Barracks to "rifle marksmanship, road marches, tactical training," and other military skills, for as he says bluntly—his manner of speech is so forthright, so unadorned, that he probably speaks to his mother bluntly—"West Point is not going to school to be a physics major; it's learning to drive a tank."

"Yeah, I know the definition of leather [one of the ritual memory tests], but this summer the things we were asked to memorize were much more military—the soldiers' creed and everything about our assault rifle and grenades," says plebe Andrew Scott, a descendant of General Winfield Scott, old Fuss 'n' Feathers of Mexican War fame, whose remains repose in the West Point Cemetery. Andy's sister, Katherine, is a firstie, a batallion commander: She lives in Scott Hall, named after her preening ancestor. Sibling relations are strange, though not necessarily strained, at West Point. "We can talk to each other," says Kate. "No plebes can interact with upperclassmen, that's fraternization. But it's my brother, so I'm allowed to recognize him. If I was walking across the area and saw him, he wouldn't just come up and say, 'Hey, Kate.' He would stand at attention. But he can come over to my room. I can give him advice, but I try to stay away from giving him unfair advantages. That's not what a brother or sister is for; we can be there for moral support."

The generals who run West Point today are products of the Vietnam years—the Academy's nadir. A poll of firsties in 1971 found that more than half regretted coming to West Point. (It wasn't all bleakness, though. The highlight of Vietnam-era protest along the Hudson came on Moratorium Day 1969, when 200 Vassar girls presented flowers to the cadets. The soldiers-to-be greeted them with wry cordiality. One football player, offered a daffodil, promptly ate it; another cadet announced that he had to leave, as he was late for "poison-gas class.")

After the war, a West Point captain said, "Vietnam taught us something about leadership. You can't be out of touch with the people you are going to lead. In Vietnam, if you gave an order that the troops didn't understand, they might say, 'F*** you, Jack. I'm not going. See you around.' Someone who comes out of this place has to know how to deal with that kind of thing."

Thus the emphasis by Christman & Co. on "ridding this institution of vestiges of sophomoric behavior." The Supe contends "there was for far too long a feeling that we could hector and berate a plebe and that was okay, that somehow we'd go out into the Army and not be affected by that. Well, I saw too many junior officers deal with their platoon or company the way an upperclassman dealt with a plebe—and you don't do that."

"SIR, THE DESSERT TODAY IS OREOS..."

Much as Commandant Abizaid may be loath to admit it, West Point is a school; each cadet's room contains a personal computer but not a gun. (The computer's cost is deducted from their pay, which totals about $7,000 a year.) Typically, a cadet rises at 6:00 and spends the bulk of the day in class, until mandatory athletics in late afternoon. Leisure time—or study time, as it were—is reserved for evenings. Taps is played over the barracks intercom at 11:30; lights must be out by midnight, except for firsties (a recent liberalization). Televisions are not permitted for a cadet's first two years; plebes may have stereos after their first Christmas, but the noise mustn't travel down the hall. Drinking and drug use are forbidden.

In some respects these are typical college kids—Gary Conway, director of cadet radio station WKDT, tells me that the corps prefers alternative rock and country to John Philip Sousa. But in other ways—well, as Bryce Bowman asks, "In how many colleges do you wake up and say to your roommate, 'How do we clean our room today?'" Nor are there many schools in which fatigued students who start to nod off in class are encouraged to stand in order to stay awake. Unnerving to the instructor, one might think, but they seem not to mind.

In his retirement at Gettysburg, where he could walk around Cemetery Ridge and Little Round Top and all those other lyrically named bloodbaths he had studied half a century before, Dwight Eisenhower wrote, "The pleasures of a cadet's life were the same in my day as they were in Grant's and probably are today—the forbidden food tidbits smuggled in from the outside and enjoyed in barracks after taps, the long winter evenings spent in unauthorized meetings discussing graduation prospects, the practical jokes on each other or on the lowly plebe." The homely pleasures of cadet life remain constant. They are bonded through common trials; these friendships, which will last past a lifetime, give their lives shape and ballast.

"This is not a monastery," insists Supe Christman, despite the T-shirt that reads, "Sex Kills...Go to West Point and Live Forever." Whereas once the plebe was forbidden to go home from R-Day until the next summer—an obvious attempt to sever him from family and home—today he gets two weekend passes before his first Christmas, and in subsequent years "weekend opportunities grow exponentially," says Christman.

Philip Kamrass

Second class cadet Bryce Bowman

Ed Ruggero worries about this. "West Pointers are

ARCHIVED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

often criticized for being socially immature, probably as a result of being locked up for four years. They get out to their first assignments and many of them act like high school sophomores (I was one of those). In recent years cadets have been given more privileges—leaves, passes, etc.—with the idea that they'll know how to act. I don't think this will make them soft, but I am concerned that it will dilute those bonds that come from shared experiences. I believe this is one of the problems the Naval Academy faces; midshipmen are a lot closer to being college students than are West Point cadets. They also have many of the same problems other college students have (cheating, drugs, sex scandals)."

Ruggero may be playing the part of Old Grad—each class is convinced, says Christman, that theirs was the "last time when Beast Barracks was still Beast Barracks"—but he is asking the question that West Point has asked—and answered differently every few years—since 1802: What is the proper balance between regimentation and liberty? A restive cadet in the 1970s asserted, "The central, ironic paradox of Academy life is that the institution attempts to build leaders by denying them room for individual choice, thought, and initiative." Or as a critic of the academies puts it, "Compare this to the lifestyle of an ROTC cadet who attends a civilian university. Those cadets, generally, hold jobs to help pay for their education and some even have families to support. They must decide on their own whether or not to stay up late, go to class, stay in shape, etc. It is incumbent upon them to discipline themselves," whereas "Academy cadets have most of their decisions made for them.... The Academy may produce a more regimented officer, but not necessarily a more self-disciplined one."

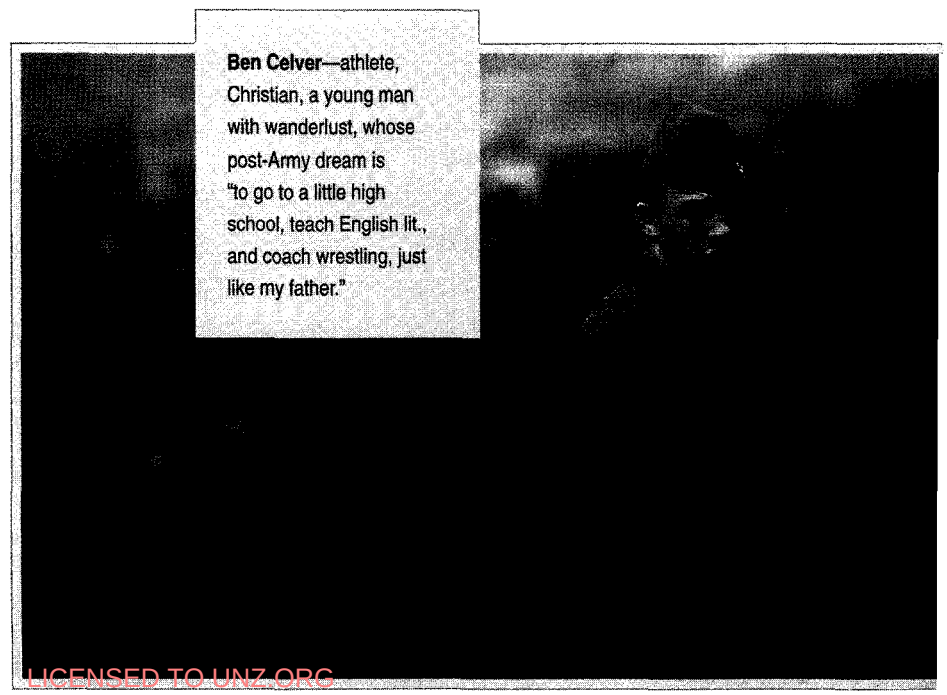
West Point promotes itself to solicit candidates as any school does, and it soon may have help from an old standby: television.

Fans of TV's "golden age"—those gilded nights when living rooms across the land were invaded by the likes of Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.—may recall "The West Point Story." Whatever the artistic shortcomings of that 1950s series, it served as a valuable recruiting tool, and it is a measure of the Academy's determination to sell itself to American teendom that Hollywood producer Beth Sullivan gained the full cooperation of everyone from the Superintendent on down when she filmed a pilot episode last summer for a proposed new series to be titled "West Point, USMA."

Sullivan produced the treacly CBS drama "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman," in which Jane Seymour battled prejudice, sexism, and degrading environmental practices on the frontier. Word is—surprise!—that the villain of her "West Point, USMA" is a cranky old grad who can't accept the presence of women at his alma mater. Commandant Abizaid says, "My fear is that it will turn into 'West Point 10996,'" a teenaged soap opera on the Hudson, in which models will embody duty, honor, country, pulchritude. Superintendent Christman, by contrast, insists that "West Point, USMA" will be "a value-laden show." Sullivan is still peddling her pilot, with Academy assistance: General Christman actually accompanied her to a meeting in California with CBS brass where she pitched her wares. At press time, the show had not been picked up.

At 12:05 p.m., the 4,000 members of the corps of cadets eat lunch in cavernous Washington Hall, underneath an assortment of early American and state flags. I am guided to the table of Company C-4 by Joanna Pietrantonio, a firstie from Southern New Jersey, a platoon leader who looks as though she could be cast as the pretty and wholesome cadet—the anti-Heather Locklear—in a weekly West Point TV series. (See nearby sidebar.) She is an English major who likes T. S. Eliot, Emily Dickinson, Ezra Pound, and opera. There are ten of us, including three plebes who sit, ramrod straight, at the end of the table opposite "Table Commandant" Iker, a friendly firstie from Oklahoma. The table commandant sets the tone for the table, which is conversational but not raucous. Among those at our repast is Ben Celver, a wrestler from Auburn, Washington, who took last year off and did volunteer work in Nepal, Bangladesh, and India to "escape the concrete, materialist society I'm in here sometimes." Celver is an engaging fellow: a real self-improver, the sort who "if I'm reading a book and I don't understand a word I look it up." Imagine Jack Kerouac at West Point—athlete, Christian, a boy with wanderlust whose post-Army dream is "to go to a little high school, teach English lit., and coach wrestling, just like my father."

Lunch today is sloppy joes and scalloped potatoes (dietician Dawn Roper tells me that the cadets prefer "pizza and wings, like all teenagers"); the entire corps is served simultane-



Ben Celver—athlete, Christian, a young man with wanderlust, whose post-Army dream is "to go to a little high school, teach English lit., and coach wrestling, just like my father."

Philip Kamrass

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Philip Kamrass

ously in a herculean feat of scullery. In 20 minutes, our plates will be cleaned.

One of the plebes reports, "Sir, the dessert today is Oreo cookies." This news is digested, and I reflect on the self-discipline it takes to announce, without smiling and with a sense of gravity, the presence of black and white cookies. We eat and chat, all but the plebes, who are quiet. They are permitted to eat unmolested, however, unlike in days of yore. (Sam Bartholomew recalls, "I'll never forget July 4, 1962. I had a big steak, strawberry shortcake, and french fries dumped in the trash because an upperclassman thought I had mixed up the first and last names of the actress in *Godzilla vs. Frankenstein*.")

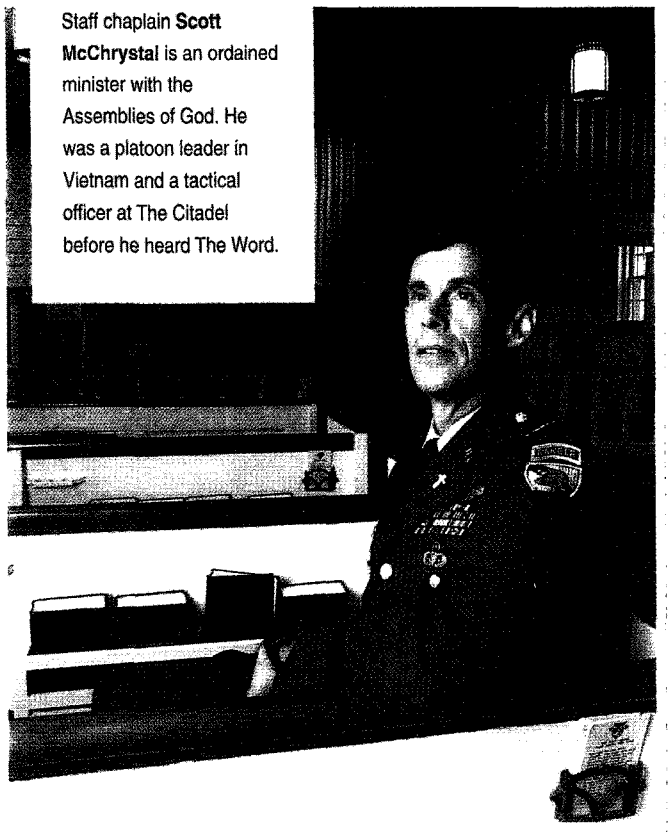
A plebe still may not speak to an upperclassman unless spoken to. I ask the trio of plebes, "Do you dread being in the presence of these guys, the upperclassmen?" "Yes, sir," they reply in unison.

Lunch has been wolfed down, and a plebe stands to report, "Sir, there are two and a butt end stalks of broccoli left." (I was reassured of the cadets' basic normality when, later, Ben Celver told me that he and his classmates also find it hard not to crack smiles at this sober-faced accounting of the table's scraps.) At meal's end, the command is given to all cadets, "Brigade rise," and the plebes of C-4 stand and shout, "Go Cowboys, fire it up, C-4, yee-hah, you know it." Cadet Pietrantonio tells me that C-4 is the only company that makes its plebes yell its motto. It's "loud and obnoxious," she says with a smile, but "our company is really close," unlike her company of her first two years, which "was not cohesive" and had "a lot of arguing and resentment toward the chain of command."

For all the humanizing—or weakening, choose your adjective—reforms of recent years, West Point can still sometimes be stern, forbidding, mirthless. Most cadets do time in the slough of despond—to which religion is a favorite antidote.

Ardent West Pointers speak of the corps as Christians speak of the body of believers. West Point is no longer an Episcopalian redoubt—is any place this side of the Connecticut suburbs?—but the hillside Cadet Chapel remains a looming (and booming—its 20,000-pipe organ is the largest in the world) Gothic hillside presence. Catholic and Jewish chapels also grace the grounds; there are no plans—yet—for a mosque.

Mandatory chapel attendance was struck down by the Supreme Court in 1973—a good thing, says staff chaplain Scott McChrystal, for it "served the purpose of inoculation: you take something so you don't get it later." The chaplain is an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God—you can't get much farther from West Point's historic Episcopalianism—who boasts an unusual resume: He was a platoon leader in Vietnam and a tactical officer at The Citadel before he heard The Word. He estimates that at least half the cadets participate in some form of worship—many in such parachurch groups as Officers Christian Fellowship or Navigators—although he curses the enemy Time. "There are ample opportunities to integrate your faith with what we do. But if you don't grab ahold and make time, that will get squeezed out by seemingly more urgent requirements. My son [a plebe] is pressed to find even 10 minutes for devotion in a day."



Staff chaplain **Scott McChrystal** is an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God. He was a platoon leader in Vietnam and a tactical officer at The Citadel before he heard The Word.

There is probably less racial segregation at West Point than at other institutions of higher learning. Some of this is due to compulsion—cadets eat, live, work with other members of their company; there are no "black tables" or "ethnic dorms" of the sort found elsewhere. (Cadets do note that Asian students tend to hang together; the "Asian Connection," they call it.) But the religiosity of many cadets dissolves racial barriers. Like athletics, Bible studies and Sunday school are instruments of integration.

As for politics, the corps is more Republican than most student bodies this side of Hillsdale College. Cadets are careful not to denigrate the Commander in Chief in front of outsiders with pads and pencils, but seldom is heard a venerating word about President Clinton. Gore Vidal, who has written about his birthplace with both affection and mordant wit, captured the irony of a military academy full of "conservatives" with his observation that "the ideals of socialism are anathema to them even though, paradoxically, the West Pointer is entirely cared for by the state from his birth in an Army hospital (if he is born into a military family) to taps at government expense in a federal bone-yard."

SOMETIMES A STUDENT...

The B.S. is the only degree granted at West Point, although cadets may major in 19 fields, including such unscientific frivolities as History or Philosophy and Literature. But every cadet takes the same 31-course core: 16 are in the "humanities and social sciences," 15 are "math, science, & engineering." This ratio is disturbing to those who fear the Academy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is becoming just another college (albeit one that requires students to study "Terrain Analysis" and offers courses in "Low-intensity Conflict"). "People say we've turned into Penn State," sighs Commandant Abizaid, but "there are no civilians walking around in beads and sandals. We are not training people to be doctors and lawyers and candlestick-makers—we're training them to be soldiers."

The catalogues contain the usual guff about the twenty-first century, our allegedly shrinking world, and "performing global duties in a multicultural environment," but there are no cakewalk courses of the sort that keep the Ohio State football team eligible. West Point offers "not a single course in AIDS awareness, or music appreciation, or bowling, or physics for poets and lovers," says Dean Lamkin.

"Midshipmen at the Naval Academy are a lot closer to being college students than are West Point cadets. They also have many of the same problems other college students have (cheating, drugs, sex scandals)."

"The heart of this academy must forever be the junior rotating faculty," insists Superintendent Christman. These are captains and majors with master's degrees, often West Point grads, who teach for three years and then march back into the Army. They compose 62 percent of the faculty; another 22 percent are civilians with doctorates, and the remainder are Academy Professors, military men with Ph.D.s who lead the departments and stay until retirement.

"Scholarship is not as important as teaching," says Lamkin. Unlike other deans, he weighs an applicant's skill in the martial arts. "Would you hire a brilliant mathematician who was a so-so soldier?" I ask. "Absolutely not," he replies. "I cannot be putting up an example that bifurcates the academic and military development of cadets."

The preponderance of military men among West Point's faculty is often excoriated by outsiders. Early in this century Harvard's president Charles W. Eliot offered the classic criticism: "No school or college should have its teaching done almost exclusively by recent graduates of the same school or college who are not teachers and who serve short terms. West Point, so far as its teachers are concerned, breeds…a very bad practice for any educational institution."

Does the Point's professoriate stack up against a top civilian faculty? "No," says Professor Pojman, a civilian Ph.D. with academic tours of duty at Oxford, Berkeley, and NYU, among others, "but it doesn't have to. Almost 90 percent of the courses here are core courses: You need people who know that course, you don't need worldwide scholars. And, actually, for most teaching at universities, you don't need a Ph.D. That's a myth." Moreover, "these officers are there for them," putting in office hours that would make a State U. prof's head spin. (The civilian professors are often similarly dedicated. Says Dean Lamkin, "I interview each of them personally and I ask, 'Do you believe in duty, honor, country?'" Hint to prospective interviewees: Answer Yes.)

Norman Schwarzkopf, who was an engineering mechanics instructor during one rotation, declares, "West Point taught the military ethos in the most effective way imaginable: It gave us war heroes for teachers." Instructor Schwarzkopf would often "put aside the textbook, sit on the edge of the desk, and talk about what it means to be an officer, about values and morality and honor. I felt that was my responsibility far more than teaching the principles of friction and why wheels roll down hills. Sure, I wanted the cadets to understand mechanics—but only so they'd graduate and become good Army officers."

Then there is the chronic time squeeze. A faculty member in the 1970s asserted, "although there are potentially great students at the Academy, very few of them ever attain that status." Professor Pojman concurs, noting that "the biggest difference between [cadets] and good students elsewhere is that they don't have the time to develop into scholars."

Classes at West Point are much like those in a typical selective university. Except they're not. For one thing, no one straggles in. "They don't even consider cutting class," says Colonel Rick Kerin. "They don't consider being late. It's just ingrained." Cadets stand at attention as class begins; the "section marcher" announces their presence. Responses begin, invariably, with "sir" or "ma'am." Class size is almost always below 18. Humanities classes are seldom lectures; they take the form of extended dialogues, as in Professor Kerin's drama class, where 12 members discussed Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Its feminist themes were chewed over, but sacrifice, chivalry, and honor also worked their way into the hour. (Don't suppose that classroom discussion at West Point pits troglodytes against Neanderthals. As at most schools today, the theme of the freshman composition course is "diversity and multiculturalism," by

Philip Kamrass

Major **Kellie Simon** is a calculus instructor with a no-nonsense class demeanor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Philip Kamrass

First Captain Robert Shaw

which is not meant the experience of Swedish Americans and Welsh Americans.)

We also sat in on Major Kellie Simon's "Discrete Dynamical Systems and Introduction to Calculus," a required course for plebes. Major Simon is a rotating instructor with a no-nonsense class demeanor. After the morning salute, she sends her plebes immediately to the blackboards, in teams of two. They scrawl their names in the upper corner of each pane and spend the next 55 minutes "working problems" that were absolutely incomprehensible to your innumerate fly on the wall. After much conferring, head-scratching, and trial and error, one cadet team comes up with the right answer and is invited by Major Simon to enlighten the others. Cadets who don't get it are invited—nay, strongly encouraged—to come by for extra instruction, for at no college in America are teachers as available for tutoring. (Nor is one likely to overhear a calculus student at any other school of higher learning ask, "Did you have boxing today?")

Every plebe takes a freshman literature course that consists largely of poetry—contemporary poetry, not Kipling and "In Flanders Fields." While some of the military instructors view it as sissy-ish, Terry Freeman, the founder of West Point's visiting poets program, argues, "No one familiar with the ugliness of the simplistic, heavy-handed, impersonal rhetoric that sometimes infests military discourse can doubt that sensitizing cadets to the beauty and power of poetic language will ennoble and enrich their leadership in a profession that must involve saving lives more than it does taking them." (Jefferson Davis would have approved. As Secretary of War, he wrote President Buchanan, "It has long been the subject of remark that the graduates of the Military Academy whilst occupying the first rank of scholars in the exact sciences were below mediocrity in polite literature. Their official reports frequently exhibited poverty of style.")

Freeman and his successor, Colonel Kerin, have brought such poets as Mark Strand, Robert Pinsky, and Charles Wright to give readings—which the poets do with great enthusiasm, for as Kerin says, "we buy 1,000 books or so of theirs as course texts," which often quadruples the poet's sales. The visiting poets are pleasantly surprised. As one, Jorie Graham, remarked, "What moved me deeply was the way [the cadets] searched through the literature, from Shakespeare to contemporary poetry, in order to determine a right moral choice in a situation where, increasingly, that is impossible."

SOMETIMES A SOLDIER...

So what are they: college students receiving military training or soldiers talking college-level courses? "We are all confused," chime in several top-rank firsties to whom I posed the question.

Commandant Abizaid is not confused. "Cadets are future officers of the United States military," he says forcefully. "They are not college students. They take college courses in the process of becoming officers in the Army." There is no hand-wringing among the military instructors over the dearth of meditation time at the Academy. "We understand that the cadet lifestyle denies the possibility of contemplation," one faculty member has said, "but then who wants a platoon leader who contemplates the order to take the hill?"

Upon graduation a cadet becomes a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and is obliged to serve at least five years. The highest-ranked grads choose their branch—infantry for the gung-ho, Corps of Engineers for the calculating—while the "goats" (lowest-ranked cadets) get the leftovers. A cadet may drop out without incurring any further military obligation until his cow year. "Walking into class the first day of third year is like breaking a mirror," goes one old joke. "Both bring seven years of bad luck." Quit thereafter—or be separated for bad grades or misbehavior—and you're in the Army now, as a lowly enlisted man.

This past summer, on the Sunday before classes began, Commandant Abizaid instituted an Affirmation Ceremony at which the incoming cows were presented with second lieutenant's bars to carry until graduation. He has also—to the discomfort of some upperclassmen—required cadets to address each other by their shadow ranks: plebes are privates, yearlings are corporals, cows are sergeants, and firsties are lieutenants.

A large majority of those retaking the oath arrived at West Point with aspirations that went beyond soldiery. (The "South Hudson Institute of Technology" is one mocking nickname for the Academy.) "I came desiring Sparta," says Lieutenant Colonel Michael Chura ('80), deputy director of the Department of Military Instruction; "I was in a minority." Colonel Pierce, director of policy planning, says that only 20 percent of male cadets (and 14 percent of females) in the classes of 1998-2002 came to West Point primarily out of a "desire to be an Army officer." (These figures are obtained from surveys of cadets during the first three days of Beast Barracks; "How are you enjoying it so far?" is not among the questions.)

So why do they come? They want a challenge; a good education (a *free* education if you don't count the five-year obligation as payment in full); something different, difficult, and exciting. But then again most people join the military for reasons other than the smell of gunfire. The armed forces are the nation's largest government jobs program, and today's recruitment ads sell the military as a kind of Job Corps with tanks and helicopters. Michael Chura spent two and a half years as a recruiter; he found that people join the regular Army for job security, as a means to get money for college—"so why should West Point be any different?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Those who expect their post-Beast education to be math and engineering with a few marches thrown in are soon disabused. Summers are devoted to military training: after plebe year, they train at nearby Camp Buckner, learning to fire the M-16 and survive in the woods and taking ever-popular demolitions training; they also spend a week at Fort Knox, where tank-driving is among the skills acquired. The next summer cadets act as squad leaders at Camp Buckner or Beast Barracks or sojourn in actual Army units around the country. Finally, the summer before becoming a firstie, half the class leads training at Camp Buckner or Beast, while the other half are posted at bases around the world.

West Point offers "not a single course in AIDS awareness, or music appreciation, or physics for poets and lovers," says Dean Lamkin.

The downside of placing cadets in charge at Camp Buckner, according to one cow, is that "it's their first time making decisions, and their mistakes cost 1,000 people their time and make them hate it." The upside is, well, that it's their first time making decisions, and mistakes cost time, not lives. West Point takes upon itself the burden of being a "leadership laboratory." As Superintendent Maxwell Taylor stated in 1946, "West Point is essentially a school for leaders."

There is also leadership by the book: juniors must study Military Leadership, which includes classes on "vertical dyad linkage theory." Old-fashioned West Point-haters would have a field day with this; as the Academy's one-time scourge, *Harper's Weekly*, scoffed, "war being an art, not a science, a man can no more be made a first-class painter, or a great poet, by professors and textbooks; he must be born with the genius of war in his breast."

Robert Shaw, a North Carolinian, son of a disabled Vietnam vet, is First Captain of the class of 1999. The first captain is a sort of valedictorian-plus: selected on the basis of his academic and military records, he is responsible for the entire corps. ("We old first captains must never flinch," said one—"Black Jack" Pershing—to another—Douglas MacArthur.)

Shaw is a rarity: a First Captain who is a product of the U.S. Military Academy Prep School, located in northern New Jersey, which over ten months prepares enlisted men and high-school grads with substandard records for the Academy. Each year about 150 prep schoolers enter West Point; they rise to the top quickly, for as Shaw says, "The prepsters are the ones who already know everything as far as wearing a military uniform, shoeshine, room appearance." Yet a stigma also attaches itself to USMAPS grads, for an inordinate number are jocks who lacked the grades to make West Point on their first go-around. (More than a third of black West Point cadets started at USMAPS, as compared to 11 percent of whites. Yet USMAPS alumni graduate from West Point at a rate slightly above average.)

"I started college," says Shaw. "First semester I did so well they asked me not to return; so I enlisted in the infantry and spent just short of three years in the 82nd Airborne Division." His platoon leader was a West Pointer who pushed, pulled, and lobbied Shaw into USMAPS.

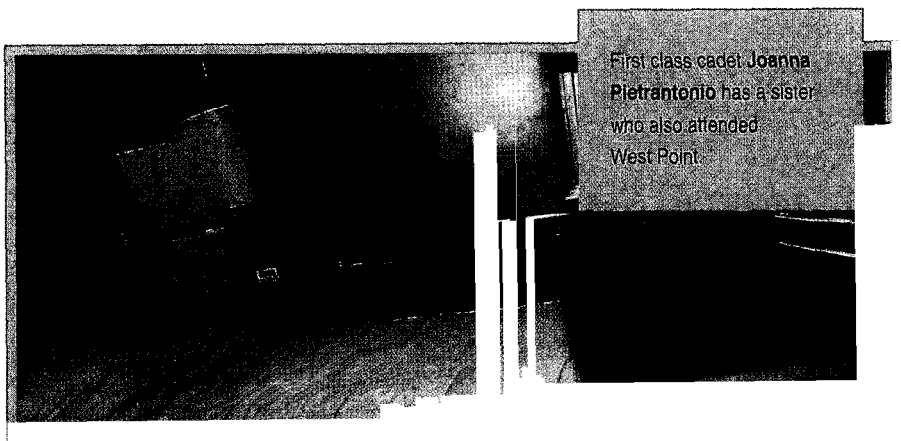
Now Shaw is a star, and a true believer. He speaks reverently of his hero, General James Gavin, the 82nd Airborne assistant commander on D-Day. (And a West Point critic—"the Academy," said Gavin, "tends to stultify curiosity.") Shaw says that "the most rewarding" thing he has done at West Point is mentor two plebes: a sophomore task that provides genuine leadership training.

"There's worse ways to go," says Shaw, when I ask if he ever thinks about dying in battle. He is not vainglorious about it; his father's disability is more real to him than John Wayne movies. At an 1880 West Point reunion of the Grand Army of the Republic, General William T. Sherman (1840) said, "There is many a boy here today who looks on war as all glory, but boys, it is all hell." Despite the CNN interventions of the 1990s—"There's nothing more moving than having an infantryman or soldier help a young child across the street or help stabilize a region without having to resort to violence," says Major Peter Bechtel, a political science instructor—one suspects that certain of these cadets will someday find hells that make Somalia look like Eden.

WHERE THE GIRLS ARE

The nineteenth-century poet Charles Fenno Hoffman asked of West Point, "Where dost thou find a fitter place on earth / To nurse young love?" Alas for these young hearts, the point is moot.

Cadets may date each other, but the Academy takes parietals seriously. Hand-holding, let alone kissing, is PDA—public display of affection—and thus forbidden in view of others.



Philip Kamrass

First class cadet Joanna Pietrantonio has a sister who also attended West Point.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Male and female cadets may visit each other, but the door must be open, and they are not allowed to sit on the same piece of furniture. (What cadets do with each other off the post is their own business, though an off-post romp between a plebe and upperclassman would be fraternization, and thus illicit.)

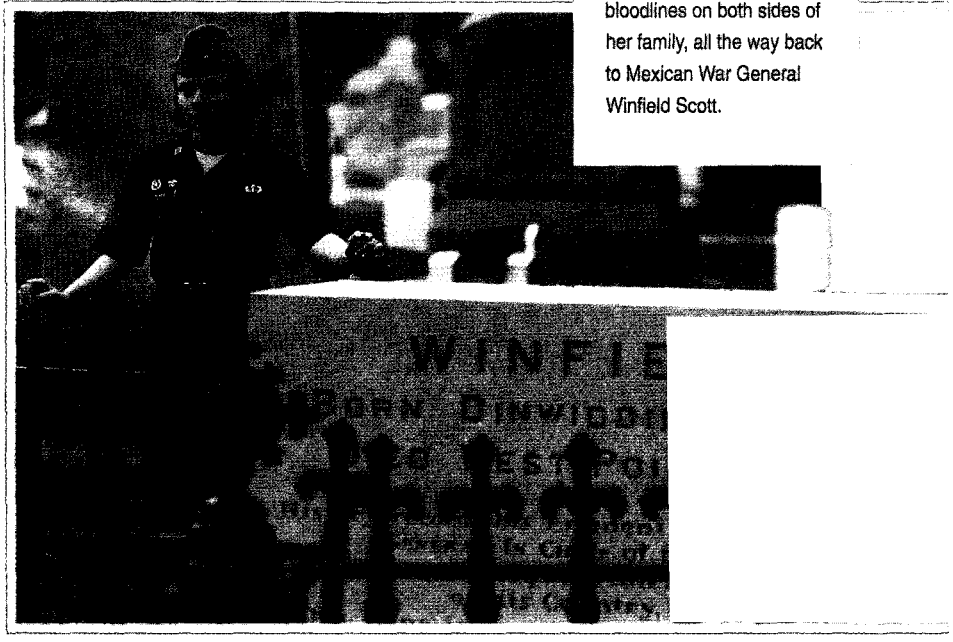
"Sometimes the two sexes don't look at each other in a favorable way here," says Joanna Pietrantonio. "When a guy dates a girl cadet, he usually gets some flack from his classmates." She has been dating Joe Benson, starting tight end on the Army football team, for over two years and concedes "it's hard to maintain a relationship because we only get to see each other at night."

Private displays of affection are not unknown. One graduate of the Class of 1998 impregnated his cadet girlfriend, secretly married her, then had the marriage annulled and deposited the baby with family for safekeeping. Given that regulations state, "Any cadet who is married prior to graduation, or who has custody of a child or incurs a legal obligation to support a child prior to graduation shall be separated from the military academy," one might have assumed that the lovebirds would be headed for points non-West. But these are litigious times, and since the annulment erased, Kennedy-like, the cadets' marriage, Academy administrators permitted them to stay. (Pregnant cadets may take a one-year leave of absence and return, sans baby.)

Which brings us to the broader question, one that Academy officials insist has been answered once and for all: Should women—who compose 15 percent of the class of 2002—be at West Point? In 1975, Congress ordered the academies to admit women the next year. (Delaware Republican Congressman Pete du Pont was the prime sponsor of integration.) Former Superintendent William Westmoreland protested, "Maybe you could find one woman in ten thousand who could lead in combat, but she would be a freak, and we're not running the Military Academy for freaks." But the women came.

Finding a West Point officer today who will criticize the sexual integration of the Academy is like stumbling across a Honus Wagner baseball card. Lieutenant Colonel Rick McPeak, a professor of popularity-fading Russian and member of the last all-male class at West Point (1980), recalls that former Dean General Gerald Galloway once began a lecture to the faculty, "If you don't think women should be at West Point, please leave by the door behind you." The exodus did not commence. McPeak explains, "When the Army adopts a policy, many looking from the outside say, 'You just salute; you have your views and you go on.'" Well, no. "When the Army adopts a policy, there is an expectation that you will internalize the values associated with that policy." What West Pointers regard as praiseworthy loyalty can sometimes seem to a civilian like Winston Smith learning to love Big Brother in *1984*.

Not all men in the early '80s classes behaved chivalrously. "When a woman comes up to a cadet and says, 'Good morning, sir,' and the response is, 'Good morning, bitch,' we have a real problem," says McPeak. "Those things were going on 20 years ago. Either I'm naive or that's ancient history now."



Phillip Kamrass

Kate Scott has West Point bloodlines on both sides of her family, all the way back to Mexican War General Winfield Scott.

The sharpest critics of letting girls in continue to be old grads. Karl Day ('57) of the Family Research Council says that "mixing and mingling of young females and young testosterone-laden males who are warriors is disruptive of unit cohesion, morale, and discipline. Feminization has degraded the Academy and required a broadening of academics to accommodate women who are not particularly engineering-focused." He explains the attitude gap between old and new grads: "There's a remarkable difference between those who have seen serious warfare and those who have experienced made-for-TV wars, where you put Marines on the beach and there are cameras already there. There's going to be a big change in this country when the bodybags start coming back in size 34B."

The party line is that things are going swimmingly and that only a few mossbacks still gripe about women. Dean Lamkin sounds fed up, as if he's sick of hearing for the 500th time that females ruined the Point and how today's kids couldn't shine the Goat of 1947's shoes. "I don't need to respond to the class of 1951," he says. "I don't need to respond to anyone but the people of the United States. We've got the greatest student body in the world, and for somebody in an older class to question the morals, the ethics, the intelligence, the dedication of these cadets is totally out of line. That means they haven't been back here in 30 years. They don't know what they're talking about."

So have women changed West Point? Does West Point change women? Kate Scott, the descendant of Old Fuss 'n' Feathers, fiancée of a fellow cadet, a woman whose bloodlines on both sides run West Point gray, says, "There are times when it's clear that there's a difference between me, a female cadet, and a regular cadet. *A regular cadet!*" she catches herself. "But usually it's not a big deal."

Major Peter Bechtel, whose sister is also a West Point graduate, insists that the presence of women has changed little.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I've seen the same camaraderie [at Camp Buckner], the same discussion. If there's profanity or jokes in a bus, they're said without regard to who's around. It's not the case that they're trying to protect the girls."

"Is it harder to discipline women?" I ask First Captain Robert Shaw. "Not at all," he replies, which is the right answer, though it's hard to see such a polite young man screaming in an 18-year-old plebe girl's face. Reverse roles and complications multiply. Professor McPeak recalls a female platoon leader who had a nightmare: "I give an order and everybody ignores me." McPeak remarks, "I would never in all my life" have such a concern.

Among the most trenchant critics of sexual integration is James Webb, a Naval Academy graduate and former Secretary of the Navy, whose essay "Women Can't Fight" remains the classic exposition of the theme. "There is a place for women in our military, but not in combat," wrote Webb. "And their presence at institutions dedicated to the preparation of men for combat command is poisoning that preparation." (One cadet suggests "it's kind of a waste" to put women through summer infantry exercises, in light of the prohibition on women in combat.)

Given that West Point is training its cadets to serve in an army whose mission is, more and more, the occupation of various Third World countries for purposes of nation-building, infrastructure creation, and "peacekeeping," Webb's conclusion retains its relevance: "If it is the consensus of Congress that the service academies no longer perform their historic function of preparing men to lead in combat...it would be logical and cost-effective to close them down.... If the taxpayers...want simply to buy a brain with military training, they can purchase that combination through an expanded ROTC program at a fraction of the cost."

Both Lucian Truscott's *Full Dress Gray* and Ed Ruggero's *The Academy* feature conservative members of Congress seeking to defund West Point, for as the senator in Truscott's book charges, "we have an Army today that is being feminized, and much of the responsibility for this trend lies with West Point." Yet Truscott dismisses the prospect of real live conservative opposition to West Point. "There's no percentage in it for 'em. They all appoint kids up there, they go to the Army-Navy game, West Pointers inhabit all the military-industrial complex companies." Davy Crockett ain't in Congress anymore.

HONOR THY MATER

"A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do." That is the West Point honor code, the 13 words that are "the reason this academy is here," says Cadet Honor Captain Richard Gorini.

The honor code was not formalized until 1922; prior to that, cadets were sometimes expelled for cheating, sometimes not. "In the early days an officer's spoken or written word was his bond," says West Point historian Steve Grove. "Cheating went on when Thayer was here, and he called the boys in and said, 'You mustn't do that kind of thing,' but it wasn't looked at as an honor violation."

"A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do." Those 13 words—the West Point honor code—are "the reason this academy is here."

The code is the property of the cadets. They administer it—though the Superintendent can reverse a verdict of "found," or guilty, a matter of frustration to some cadets. This is the way it works, at least on paper: a cadet who has reason to believe that another has lied, cheated, or stolen must report this violation (after confronting the cadet, if he so chooses) to the Cadet Honor Committee within 24 hours. This sets in motion a series of investigations by Honor Committee members, which may culminate in a hearing—a trial, really, for the accused has certain rights, including to legal counsel—before a panel of four Honor Committee members and five randomly selected cadets. If six of the nine find that the cadet under suspicion *intentionally* violated the code, he is "found" and will be expelled, unless the Superintendent intervenes. (The Superintendent cannot, however, reverse a "not found" verdict.)

In recent years, according to Colonel Anthony Hartle, a professor of philosophy and chairman of the Honor Review Committee, "we have around 100 investigations a year, about 50 go to an honor hearing, and about 25 are found. About eight or nine are separated"; the rest receive lesser punishments.

Although a disproportionate number of cases involve plebes, upperclassmen who violate the code are dealt with more harshly. Honor Officer Christopher Eastburg says, "If I was found for having committed an honor violation, I would suffer much harder sanctions than if I was a freshman, because the longer you're here, the more you're supposed to internalize integrity." (Those who run afoul of West Point regulations—say, by leaving one's room after taps to meet a girl—will be punished if caught, but unless these offenses involve lying, cheating, or stealing, they are not infractions of the honor code.)

Until 1973, a cadet who was "found" by his peers and refused to resign was silenced; that is, subjected to as complete an ostracism as possible. He was not spoken to; if he dared bring a girl onto the dance floor, everyone else walked off. Among those silenced was cadet Timothy Leary, the future Harvard LSD guru, who was "found" by his peers for lying about the possession of booze. The administration reversed the verdict, but Leary went "days without talking to a single person," except for Superintendent Robert Eichelberger, who "felt the silencing was wrong" and invited the shunned cadet to make a weekly trip (non-hallucinogenic) to his office for a chat. Leary left in 1941, concluding that "Nothing good for America could come from those gray gothic piles."

The "toleration" clause, added in 1970, is the hardest for cadets to swallow. Ultimately, a cadet must be prepared to turn in a roommate or buddy for an honor violation. "It would be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

really, really difficult to turn in a friend," says one first-class cadet. "I would never do it." Nor, he guesses, would most of his classmates. (Twenty-five years ago a cadet told Richard U'Ren, "Most of us know where our loyalties are, and we ignore the toleration clause. I don't like to squeal on my brothers.")

Those who seem over-zealous in reporting fellow cadets are derided as "Honor Nazis." In George S. Patton's day they were called "quilloids," and the friendless Patton was among the most disliked quilloids. (Not that Patton cared: He endured pitiless hazing for asserting that VMI was tougher than West Point.)

Defenders of the toleration clause deny that it encourages "squealing." Karl Day explains the stakes: "I don't want my son going into combat with a platoon leader who will go out on patrol about 200 yards, sit down for three hours, and come back and render a false report. The place we teach them not to do that is the Academy."

Is it possible to *teach* honor? Cadets receive 44 hours of honor education—primarily cadet-led bull sessions about "ethical dilemmas" ranging from U.S. Army massacres (My Lai) to illicit leg-shaving (Tailhook). Colonel Rick Kerin suggests that teaching honor has become a necessity: "When I came to West Point, I didn't encounter much in the way of values, particularly with respect to honesty and integrity, that was at all different from what I'd been taught at home. I'm not sure I can say that now of the cadets who come here."

Nevertheless, the Academy is not the sort of place where one needs a bike lock or car alarm. "I leave my office unlocked," says one civilian professor. "People leave their valuables in hallways, and they invariably remain there—even if left for a week or so. I've never felt more secure."

West Pointers take with them a code of honor that acts as lodestar in the wider world. As Bryce Bowman says, "When I'm home, I'll be in a situation and say, 'What would I do at West Point?'"

When I asked my long-time former congressman for names of West Point grads in our area (rural Western New York), he smiled. "Once I appoint 'em to the academies, they're gone for good." Standing armies are uprooting forces: soldiers are scattered to the corners of the globe, and few ever make their way back home for anything more than a visit. Colonel Hartle, whose tone bespeaks his native Cunningham, Kansas, says, "It sounds cold-hearted, but I never thought a whole lot about Kansas. Your roots simply change: The focus is on the organization."

The West Point ring is worn on the same finger as the wedding ring; sometimes they are fused, but as volumes of evidence have shown us, the military and the family are not a good fit. Numerous are the pathologies associated with "military brats," or children of career soldiers who grow up homeless, always moving, never stable. Cadets are not unmindful of the price they will pay. Rare indeed is the grad who weds his or her high-school sweetheart. Those who hold onto the girl or boy back home are known as members of the "2 Percent Club." Joanna Pietrantonio has dated Joe Benson for more than two years, but "we're not engaged," she says. "We've talked about it, but unfortunately there's a high divorce rate for people who get married right out of West Point so we're going to wait."

In Ed Ruggero's novel *The Academy*, the protagonist discovers that his own imperfect family has been supplanted by the corps of cadets, for "he had more in common with these people than he had, perhaps, with his own father." But it is an inadequate substitute family indeed that permits some members to remain anonymous. Congress swelled the corps from 2,500 to 4,400 in 1974, and though it has since been trimmed to 4,000, might this still be too large?

Colonel Hartle does not advocate a smaller corps, but his explanation of why silencing would be ineffective today is revealing: "If you said a cadet was silenced you'd have a quarter of [the corps], half of them, who would have no idea who the person was. It's a slight exaggeration but I think I knew the face of every person in my class. When my son graduated in 1989, it would not have occurred to him that he should know" his classmates' faces.

Historically, the most incisive criticism of West Point, the one leveled by Andrew Jackson and Davy Crockett, is that it created an elite military caste that was estranged from the broader society and contemptuous of the citizens, who, after all, keep them in their dress grays. As the authors of one sharply critical book, *West Point: America's Power Fraternity* (1973), asked, "Should Americans trust an institution that produces men who don't trust them?"

In 1962, education researcher David Boroff noted that cadets "have a lofty disapproval of young people" as "soft, selfish, egocentric." Today, Professor Pojman says, "These kids go home and see friends from high school: They're smoking, drinking, on drugs. They feel a mild estrangement. Remarks about 'fat Americans' have come up a few times in my classes."

I spoke with one cadet, an outstanding student and athlete, who had not been home in two years. Another pitied his old friends, who are "still in this little town, they don't know about the larger world, they don't know about Iraq." Part of this estrangement, of course, is simply accelerated maturation. Cadet Eastburg recalls, "You grow up in the first six months. When I went home at Christmas freshman year everybody else was still playing video games, and I was like, 'Wow, I've really changed a lot.'"

ON BRAVE OLD ARMY TEAM

Superintendent Douglas MacArthur, who played left field in West Point's first-ever baseball game against the Naval Academy, instructed that these words be incised upon the gymnasium and in the mind of every cadet:

Upon the fields of friendly strife
Are sown the seeds
That, upon other fields, on other days
Will bear the fruits of victory.

No American school takes athletics more seriously than West Point, where Sylvanus Thayer instituted exercise as a part of the curriculum in 1817. The head of physical training at West Point bears the Dungeons and Dragons-ish title "Master of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sword." She is currently Maureen LeBoeuf, a lithe and serious Olean, New York native who admits, "It's a disappointment when I walk in. 'Master of the Sword'—people expect to see Xena the Warrior Princess."

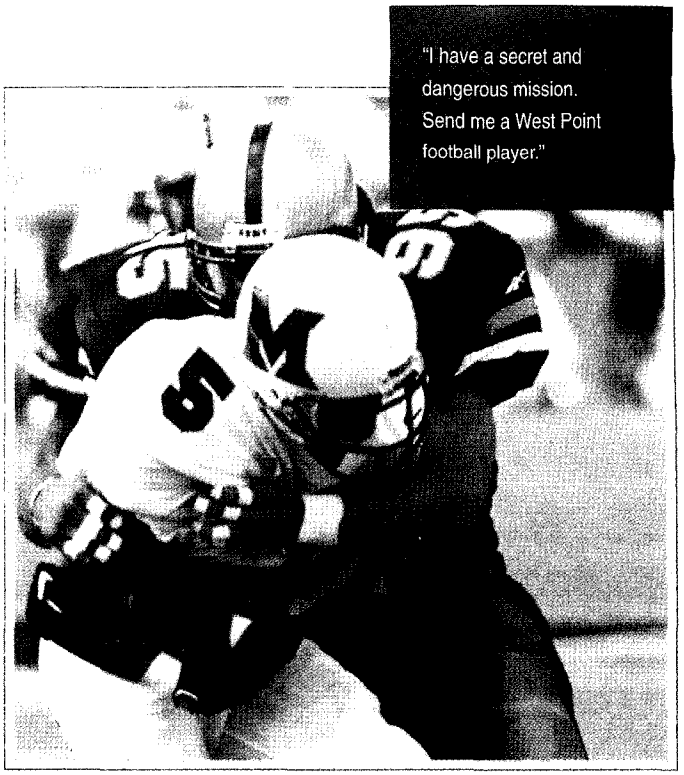
"While most universities and colleges are eliminating their physical requirement, here we have 168 hours over four years," says Colonel LeBoeuf. Male plebes must take boxing; females take self-defense. Other requirements include gymnastics, swimming, and a battery of fitness tests culminating in the "famous indoor obstacle course, which cadets love to hate." Climbing, vaulting, swinging, rolling, shimmying up ropes, and carrying medicine balls—it is every non-athlete's recurring gym-class nightmare. The obstacle course is run during cow year in "an old typical gymnasium—we tell them it's the same dust Eisenhower sucked," smiles Colonel LeBoeuf. Standards are lower for women, though administrators are quick to tell Old Grads that the average female cadet does more pushups and situps than did the average male cadet of 30 or 40 years ago.

Consistent with MacArthur's dictum "every cadet an athlete," intramural sports are mandatory for all four years, and one's performance in what is elsewhere known as phys-ed makes up 15 percent of a cadet's overall grade. Varsity athletes usually get automatic *A*s, which brings us to the most glamorous aspect of West Point: Army football, and in particular the Army-Navy game, the emotional centerpiece of the cadet year. (Among the first bits of plebe knowledge memorized during Beast is "What do plebes rank?" The answer: "Sir, the Superintendent's dog, the Commandant's cat, the waiters in the mess hall...and all the Admirals in the whole damn Navy.")

The first Army-Navy football game was played at West Point on November 29, 1890, after a challenge from a group of midshipmen. The cadets were relative strangers to the game of the oblate spheroid—only two had ever played before—but a challenge is a challenge, and led by Dennis Mahan Michie, son of legendary professor Peter Smith Michie, Army took the field and was routed 24-0. Those were, indeed, different days. At one point, Navy faked a punt and ran the ball for a touchdown, a bit of razzle-dazzle that drew cries of outrage from the West Point side. Gentlemen *do not* fake punts, the affronted cadets explained. (Among the early football skeptics was James McNeill Whistler, who protested that "to dispute...for a ball kicked round the field...is beneath the dignity of officers of the United States.")

Even today, Army-Navy is "without question, it's not even close" the greatest rivalry in football, says Coach Bob Sutton. "It's like when you play a brother or a real close friend. You want to beat them because you're really playing against yourself." ("I've never heard any trash talking" in the Army-Navy game, says fullback Ty Amey.)

The game traditionally is the final regular season contest of the college year. "Most of the seniors, this is their last football game ever, and that leads to an unbelievable commitment by those players to pour everything out," says Sutton. Unlike most games, which ebb and flow depending on the score, "Army-Navy just elevates every quarter, and it has nothing to do with what's on the scoreboard." The cadets and midshipmen stand throughout the game; when Army digs in for a goal-line stand,



the cadets chant, charmingly, "Fix bayonets!"

Army-Navy is usually played in Philadelphia, but there may be no more spectacular place to watch a college football game than at West Point's Michie Stadium, dedicated in 1924 to Army's first football hero, who was killed in 1898 in the Spanish-American War. On October Saturdays, the trees are ablaze with a splendor to still any Hudson Valley poet's heart; three cannon on the shore of Lusk Reservoir boom whenever Army scores. And the assembled 40,000 fans go light on the home team, even when it falls behind by several touchdowns, because, after all, they, unlike many of the gridders on the other side of the ball, went to class yesterday, and will go again on Monday.

West Point and the other academies are the only Division I football programs to pay their players (like the rest of its cadets) over the table, although $600 or so a month probably couldn't pay a University of Miami linebacker's monthly cell-phone bill. The squad is much larger than other teams—180-plus—and while Army might never beat Tennessee, a randomly selected team of 11 West Point cadets would destroy a randomly selected team from Tennessee or any other civilian school.

The problems Coach Sutton faces are different from those that bedevil his Division I counterparts. For instance, the typical plebe loses 15-20 pounds during Beast summer, which pretty much rules out freshmen starting on the offensive line. (Plebes do not, however, call their teammates "sir" in the huddle.)

A former Air Force assistant coach has observed that "At every other school in America, the hardest part of any football player's day is football practice. At the military academies, the *easiest* part of a football player's day is football practice." Still, some cadets call the players "get-overs," a variant of "shirker." They are excused from most of the parades; they get bigger portions at mealtime; they avoid certain scut tasks. To which for-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mer tight end Bryce Bowman replies, "Okay, we'll switch: you go out and get your head knocked around for three hours by 300-pounders, and I'll deliver laundry."

I ask Coach Sutton if football is like war, expecting the it's-just-a-game reverse, but he takes the hand-off and plunges in with a qualified yes. "All the elements that are involved in battle are present here on a smaller level. They need to function as a unit under stress. You've got to be trained, to have great poise, and maintain your composure in chaos. Nothing goes as planned, because you don't have control over your opponent." (George Marshall, a VMI man, is said—perhaps apocryphally—to have once given an order with the instruction, "I have a secret and dangerous mission. Send me a West Point football player.")

Army's record (3-8 last fall) lags behind the won-loss record of the U.S. military, but then again there are no Grenadas on the schedule. There are regular games against the likes of Notre Dame and Syracuse. While Army competes in the Patriot League in most other sports, the football team is a new member of the motley Conference USA, a collection of mostly Southern schools (Tulane, Cincinnati, Memphis, Louisville, Houston, Southern Mississippi, and East Carolina) which are about as rivalrous with Army as Colorado School of Mines is with Bowdoin. But times have changed. "Conference affiliation is mandatory for a Division I school that is serious about competing at that level," says Superintendent Christman. The league has a TV deal with Fox Sports Net and tie-ins with the Liberty Bowl and the oddly named Humanitarian Bowl, which presumably frowns on personal fouls. Army football can rake in close to $12 million, supplying the lion's share of the Academy's $15 million athletic budget.

(The basketball team, overshadowed by Army football, is best known for producing a tough Polish point guard named Mike Krzyzewski, class of '69, who played for a mercurial locker-kicking, chair-throwing wildman named Bobby Knight. Krzyzewski coached Army to NIT appearances in 1977 and '78 before building perennial champions at Duke. Although the height restriction on cadets has been removed, seven footers with soft touches—hell, seven footers who can tie their shoes—aren't clamoring to get in.)

AND WHEN I DIE...

When I asked Director of Admissions Colonel Michael L. Jones his favorite spot at West Point, he replied softly, "My roommate's grave. Randy Carlson. He was killed in Lebanon." Haltingly, he continued, "Randy went to The Citadel for a year before he came here, and he is the reason I graduated. He dragged me through math for two years; without him, I never would have made it. During the really hard times plebe year we would go to the cemetery because it was a really quiet place where no upperclassmen were around. We could do our homework, we could read Scripture, we could talk. We had a favorite tree.

"Randy and I were later stationed here when he was in the French Department and I was in admissions. He left in May of '82. The last night before he left we had him over for supper; he never married so he was like a second father for our kids. Then he and I walked down to the cemetery and Randy told me that night that if anything ever happened to him he showed me where he wanted to be buried. Three months later I had to bury him there. So when I need to get away from life, that's where I go: I go to talk to Randy and just sit there."

Every cadet is required to learn "The Corps," an anthem written a century ago by West Point chaplain Bishop Herbert Simpson.

> The long gray line of us stretches
> Through the years of a century told,
> And the last man feels to his marrow
> The grip of your far-off hold.
> Grip hands with us now, though we see not,
> Grip hands with us, strengthen our hearts
> As the long line stiffens and straightens
> With the thrill that your presence imparts.
> Grip hands—though it be from the shadows—
> While we swear, as you did of yore,
> Or living, or dying, to honor
> The Corps, and the Corps, and the Corps!

Old men cry at the singing of "The Corps." Someday graying members of the Class of 1999 will too. They will recall marches across the Plain, surviving "discrete dynamical systems," beating Navy, tossing hats in the air after a mind-numbing speech by a cabinet official or Vice President. And they will think of the white crosses in the cemetery, of classmates returned to dust well before their allotted three score and ten years, dying in Serbia or Africa or some other place on the map that can never mean to a member of The Corps what this gray gothic redoubt in the Hudson Highlands does.

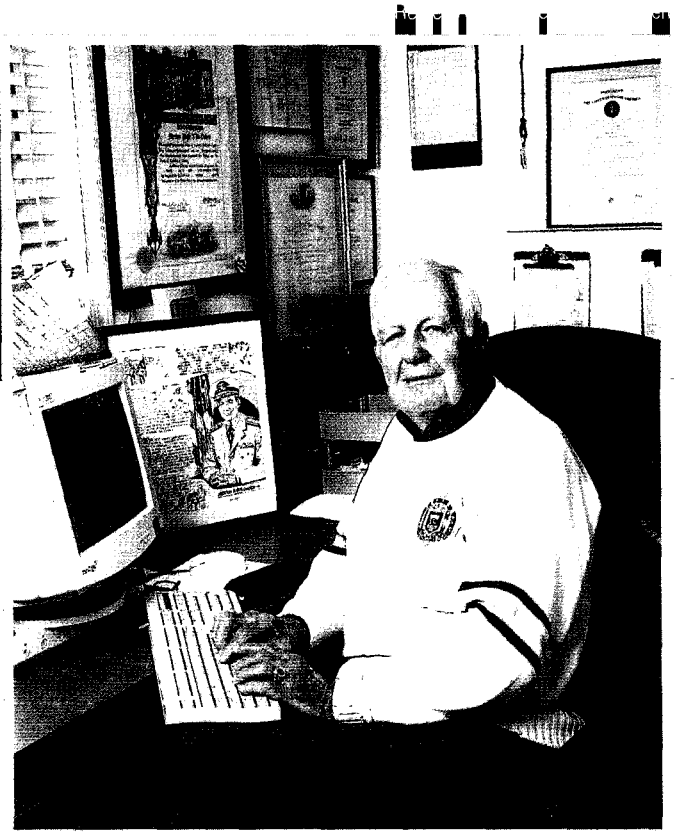
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IS THE

Naval Academy Off Course?

Last year, on the afternoon of a bright, pristine day in December, taps could be heard playing in the distance at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, an institution founded in 1845, one year before the U.S. declared war against Mexico. The same bugle call is heard every night to signal midshipmen that another day has come to an end. But taps in the afternoon signifies something else to those familiar with life at this place where the mission—to produce graduates who will risk their lives defending their country—is laid out on a bronze plaque in the middle of campus.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Dave Scavone

This time taps was the final act of a solemn ceremony honoring one for whom Annapolis had been the crucible. From all reports, Charles Davis Mize wasn't just a hero. He was a hero's hero, the kind of man this place was built to produce. Mize was Annapolis Class of 1945, graduated a year early because duty called amidst a raging war.

As it has done down through the years for tens of thousands of youths, Annapolis gave Mize a life far different from the one he left behind. It plucked him from Cave Spring, Georgia, and transported him to places with strange names like Okinawa, the Pusan Perimeter, and Saigon. There was no question in Charles Mize's mind that in 1945 when Tokyo Rose taunted, "Come and get us," he and his Annapolis classmates would take her up on the offer. The Japanese had 100,000 soldiers on the southern third of Okinawa Island, and Mize walked into the bloodiest battle of the Pacific war.

"If you could have offered my father a guarantee of 77 full years of life in 1945, when he was in the jungles of Okinawa, or again in the harrowing days of 1950 in Seoul or the Chosin Reservoir, or yet again in 1968 in Vietnam where he commanded under fire, I'm confident he would have thought that the offer was too good to be true," says his son David Mize, who, following in his father's footsteps, is now a major general in the Marine Corps.

Charles linked the Navy Cross, two Purple Hearts, and Bronze Star with combat *V* that he received to the Prayer of the Midshipman that he and his classmates had memorized and would never forget. The one that asks God to "Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and in deed, and helping me so to live that I can stand unashamed and unafraid."

As much as that day in December memorialized Major General Charles Davis Mize, it also memorialized the United States Naval Academy. At those same battles where Mize distinguished himself, hundreds of other Annapolis-trained men from "the greatest generation" led American forces to victories small and large. But now, for many in the long pews teeming with retired warriors in precisely pressed suits and heavily starched shirts, the institution they left behind exists only as a memory.

Merton Van Orden, who was a classmate of Mize's, retired from the Navy in 1975 as a rear admiral. And he will never forget his days at the Yard. Growing up in south Texas, he aspired to go to Annapolis after his favorite aunt married a Navy lieutenant. "They came through on the way back from Panama, and I had stars in my eyes. From then on, I wanted to be strictly Navy blue and gold."

Van Orden and Mize arrived on campus in the summer of 1941, and on December 7, the world took a turn. "It was a Sunday, and I remember going to chapel, as everyone was required to do in those days. Our guest speaker was Peter Marshall, and he made a magnificent sermon. Later on that day, I was on watch in Bancroft Hall and noticed that all the Yard police began moving people out. I called down to the front office and they said, Pearl Harbor has been attacked."

A sense of impending peril descended upon the 914 men who were graduated in the Class of 1945 as they faced constant reminders of what was on the horizon. "We were trained by officers who came back from Pearl Harbor," the place where eight battleships, three destroyers, and three cruisers had been put out of action, and 2,323 American fighting men were killed. "That's motivation," says Van Orden.

Still, the camaraderie often produced lighter moments. The '45ers, as they are known in Academy lore, shattered the aura of a secret society known as the Green Bowlers. Syndicated columnist Drew Pearson had reported the existence of a group of retired admirals who met over lunch to discuss Academy business. They supposedly had sway over the future of many naval careers. Whenever such secret meetings were occurring, the story goes, a large green bowl was placed in the window of the Annapolis restaurant.

When Van Orden and his classmates read Pearson's story, there was no doubt about the class insignia. "We all decided to buy green felt bowlers with '45' on them. 'Ah, we're all Green Bowlers now.' It was making fun of the idea that people can wield that kind of influence from beyond the gates," he told me.

BY JOHN MERONEY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Subsequent decades, and the last few years in particular, have taught retired admirals such as Van Orden just how difficult it is to redirect trends at the Naval Academy.

Though in Van Orden's case it hasn't been for want of trying. Just about every month since Ike was commander-in-chief, Van Orden and his classmates have been gathering at the Officer's Club at Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia, for a luncheon meeting of what they call the Chowder and Marching Society. The purpose is to catch up on each others' lives, reminisce about their Academy days, and in recent years to lament what they see as a decline in the institution that so influenced their lives.

The Naval Academy has recently made headlines not for producing heroes but for a string of misbehavior & crimes including organized cheating, car theft, LSD sales, child sexual abuse, & several egregious honor & sexual fraternization incidents.

Van Orden, who turned 77 last summer, has white hair, a fit physique, and a patrician air. He bears a resemblance to another famous Annapolis graduate and Texas native, Chester Nimitz. On the day I met him, Van Orden was wearing the tie of his other alma mater, Harvard, where he attended a management program after earning an MBA from George Washington University (all of this during his Naval career).

Van Orden was at first reluctant to be interviewed about his criticisms of the Naval Academy, afraid that he would appear hostile to an institution that makes up so much of who he is. But like other graduates with similar views, Van Orden finally justified speaking out in the hope that this might help the institution return to the mission from which he believes it has strayed: to produce leaders who will train hard in peacetime and fight hard in wartime.

He describes the Naval Academy as currently suffering from "systemic flaws." These include a dearth of discipline; out-of-control Pentagon officials who want to use the Academy as a place for political point-scoring and social experimentation; administrators obsessed with competing with civilian universities by showcasing a wide variety of liberal arts courses and thus diverting midshipmen's attention away from a traditional military education; unqualified naval officers who have positions as teachers and administrators; and too much emphasis on intercollegiate athletics.

In keeping with the ease that most Academy graduates have toward technology, several years ago Van Orden assembled an e-mail network of 119 of his classmates. It rapidly became an electronic version of the Chowder and Marching Society lunches. Correspondence about Academy news, anecdotes of the old days, and gossip about administrators is shared over the Internet. Academy graduates, no matter how disenchanted about the direction of the place, remain fiercely loyal and protective of its ideals and memory.

In 1997, at the urging of his classmates, Van Orden wrote an article arguing for reforms. He submitted it to *Proceedings*, the prominent naval journal published by the Naval Institute Press (which, although privately funded, maintains an outlet at the Academy). "I hand-delivered it to the editor," remembers Van Orden. "I said, 'This is our forum,' and he agreed with me."

To his surprise, the editors repeatedly delayed giving Van Orden an answer about whether the article would be accepted for publication. After prodding, they finally agreed, but with a caveat: Van Orden would have to shorten it, and remove a section critical of the effects of the admission of women in 1976. "I said, 'I will not do that.'"

He eventually found an outlet when the decidedly contrarian Center for Defense Journalism at Boston University asked to publish the article in its journal *Strategic Review*. Entitled "Reverse Engineer the Academy: Toward Restoring Service Integrity," the essay appeared in fall 1997.

Although there is no shortage of people who criticize the Naval Academy, especially in the wake of the admission of women and, most recently, the string of damaging scandals that have plagued Annapolis during the 1990s, Van Orden's piece was especially significant. He was not only the first senior Navy officer to go public with his disapproval, but used brazen language to describe the problems.

He wrote that plebe summer, the six-week period when freshmen are introduced to Academy life through physical and psychological discipline, had been "emasculated." The admission of women had been "ramrodded" and the result was "turmoil." Women students, Van Orden wrote, "are disruptive to good order and discipline." His suggestion: "shut off admission." Academy administrators were trying to "adjust goals and standards to fit a more permissive society." The curriculum had been broadened to courses that were "interesting and informative" but "have little to do with the military profession" (he cited Urban Economics, African Politics, Patterns in Drama, and Topics in Film and Literature). Van Orden suggested, among other things, naming a Marine Corps general as superintendent; reducing the academic workload to free up time for other kinds of training; having midshipmen learn ethics and morality not through classes but at the feet of Navy chief petty officers and Marine gunnery sergeants; and recruiting athletes whose chief aspiration is a military career, not celebrity and lucre. Van Orden's article no doubt made the rounds with military brass, including Academy officials. *Strategic Review* published numerous responses. But, curiously, there was never a reply from active Navy personnel.

Perhaps one reason was that Van Orden's arguments hit too close to home. Charles R. Larson, a four-star admiral and commander of the Pacific Command, himself a 1958 graduate, became superintendent at Annapolis in 1994, just before a spate of scandals began. Under Larson's tenure the Naval Academy made national headlines not for producing heroes like Charlie Mize but for a string of misbehavior and crimes including organized cheating, car theft, LSD trafficking, child sexual abuse, and several egregious honor and sexual fraternization incidents.

At one point it seemed Larson himself might become a casualty. A Naval Criminal Investigative Service agent accused

John Meroney is an associate editor of The American Enterprise.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Larson and his lieutenant Joseph Scranton of trying to thwart inquiries about the student-run car-theft ring, LSD use and distribution by more than 60 midshipmen, and the pedophilia case. Coupled with this, Larson was alleged to have complained when an investigation was launched about whether an upperclassman had raped two female midshipmen.

Last summer, after Larson's June retirement, the Pentagon cleared him of these charges. Scranton, however, who has since been promoted to the position of the third most important lawyer in the entire Navy, was accused of interfering with the drug probe and the child molestation case by arranging for the arrest of the accused midshipmen by local police, rather than following procedure and informing Navy investigators.

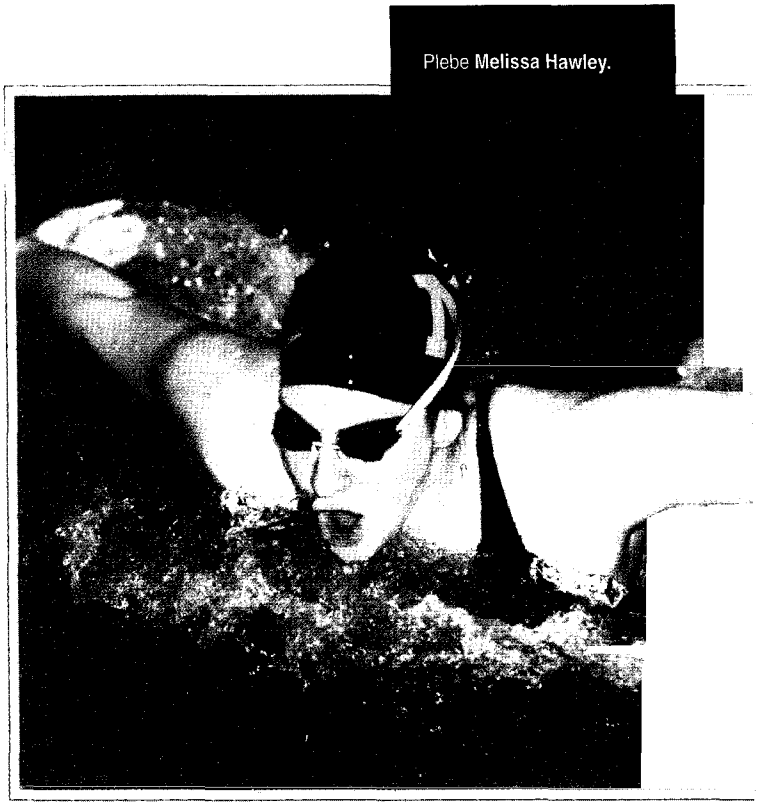
When Larson's retirement became imminent, and the announcement was made that John R. Ryan, a four-star admiral and 1967 graduate who had command of naval air forces in the Mediterranean, would replace him, Van Orden wrote directly to Ryan, again expressing his concerns. Van Orden told him that the superintendent ultimately "sets the tone" and that it was critical to "return the Academy to its former eminence as the premier institution for educating and training combat-ready officers." He added that alumni views "were given little attention" by Larson's administration, and that he hoped "early debate" could be opened on the changes he and the other '45ers were proposing.

Van Orden's letter was dated March 27, 1998. He still awaits a response.

The Third Fleet that swung up and down the east coast of Japan was the mightiest the world had ever seen...and on the bridge of the Third Fleet's flagship was the tough, stubby seadog whom the Japanese mortally hate & fear. "Bull" Halsey was on the prowl.... They know him as the Annapolis-trained Dead End Kid...whose battle cry is "Kill Japs, kill Japs, and then kill more Japs."... Ever since December 7, 1941, he had been obsessed with the desire to hit Japan. Five-feet nine-inches tall, he weighed 150 lbs. during the two years (1902, 1903) he played fullback on an oft-defeated Navy team.... He became the kind of man around whom legends grow.

—Time, *July 23, 1945*

Melissa Hawley sometimes beats the *Washington Post*. She's usually up at 5:15 every morning, 15 minutes before the paper hits the sidewalk. Every weekday—like a drill—Hawley, who is on the swim team, practices from 5:30 to 6:45. Then she delivers the newspaper to everyone on her floor in Bancroft Hall, which with corridors almost five miles long and 33 acres of floor space is the largest dormitory in the world. (It was named for George Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy in the 1840s, and founder of the Academy.) She then eats breakfast, is in class by 7:55, has a 20-minute break at 11:45, and assembles for lunch at 12:05. Imagine 4,040 midshipmen all eating at the same time in the same room. That's King Hall every day at the noon hour. Hawley starts class again at 1:30 and finishes at 3:20. At 3:45, she's back in the pool for two hours and 15 minutes more practice. Dinner, buffet style, ends at seven. Study hours start at 7:30, and lights are out at 11:00. Melissa Hawley started at the Academy as a midshipman



Plebe Melissa Hawley.

Cliff Maxwell, USNA

last July 1. And by the time she is graduated, she will have cost the American taxpayers more than $200,000.

Fifty years ago, Hawley's home town probably resembled the Georgia and Texas towns where Charles Mize and Merton Van Orden were raised. But Brentwood, Tennessee, just outside Nashville, is today best known as home to some of the top country music artists in the nation.

Hawley seems representative of the midshipmen of the 1990s. In high school she was an excellent student and an All-American swimmer for three years running. Her family has no military background, and her father works in sales for Microcomputer Solutions. Melissa's older sister attends the University of Maryland at Baltimore. Her friends were accepted at Wake Forest, Vanderbilt, Duke, and Davidson. But for her, the Naval Academy kept calling.

Much has been made of late of the growing chasm between America's civilian and military cultures. On the one hand, as journalist Thomas E. Ricks writes in his book about the Marines, *Making the Corps*, there is "the American people, whose economic, cultural, and political elites in the post-Cold War era generally know little and care less about the military." And on the other side, "in an era when many people of their age seem aimless," there's the military, "a successful and healthy institution that unabashedly teaches values to the Beavises and Buttheads of America."

Hawley is no Beavis or Butt-Head, but when her best friend in high school sends her e-mail about the party at the Kappa Alpha house at Wake Forest on Thursday night, Hawley knows she's taken the road less travelled. And when she's tested by an upperclassman to see whether she's memorized some required professional knowledge, her unusual position becomes even clearer.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She is asked to list the crew for a T-44A King Air. She doesn't know. Rather than answering "I'll find out, sir," as middies are instructed, she guesses: "Two pilots, one instructor, one crew member, and two students." Inevitably, she is grilled, "Why did you guess?" To which, as a plebe, she must respond, "Sir, since I have neither diligently labored nor brought forth pale and glimmering beads of perspiration upon my blanched and pallid brow, I find myself in this inexcusable position of complete and utter ignorance which I now attempt to elucidate. Having but meager knowledge of the question concerned and acting on the erroneous assumption that my lettered interrogator might not recognize the rank inaccuracy of my attempt, acting more on civilian's intuition than on midshipman's erudition, and seizing blindly the abstruse possibility that my futile fumblings might prove correct—I guessed, Sir." At that point, Melissa Hawley knows unambiguously that she's not in Brentwood anymore.

"You can't date in company—that's fraternization—and as a plebe you can't date upperclass because that's also fratnerization," says Hawley. "There are so many guys here and no boyfriend yet. I don't think I'll have a boyfriend the first year at all." For plebes, liberty is given Saturdays only, from after the 10:15 a.m. formation until 1:00 a.m. Sunday morning.

The differences with the other world become more obvious over Thanksgiving break. "I noticed all my friends who went to civilian schools were trying to break into manhood in a different way," says Jason Saglimbene, a plebe from just outside New York City. "The way they would get a feel of who they were is to grow a beard, maybe go buy an old junky car and try to fix it up. They were trying to do something on their own. Whereas I'm developing in another way."

Still, there are plenty of signs at Annapolis that it is the late 1990s in the good old USA. Each midshipman has a desktop computer in his or her barracks. On a bookshelf, alongside *Fundamentals of Naval Leadership,* are books by Judy Blume, Drew Carey, and Chris Rock.

There are few in the Pentagon who will say they agree with Army General Walter "Dutch" Kerwin that "the values necessary to defend the society are often at odds with the values of the society itself. To be an effective servant of the people, the military must concentrate not on the values of our liberal society, but on the hard values of the battlefield." As historian T. R. Fehrenbach put it: "Society's purpose is to live; the military's is to stand ready, if need be, to die."

Most of what is coming out of today's Washington recalls the exultant cheer by Representative Patricia Schroeder after the Tailhook scandal broke: "It's the sound of a culture cracking!" And some of it is coming from surprising quarters, such as Senator John McCain, Annapolis Class of 1958, who recently commented, "It's a fundamental principle that armed services can truly serve a democracy only if they are a reflection of that society and are impacted by the same social trends." William Cohen, Maine's former Republican Senator and now Secretary of Defense, argues in favor of "reconnecting the military to society." Even Trent Lott, the GOP standard-bearer in the Senate, has eagerly embraced 1990s fashions, commenting on the military crackdown on Lieutenant Kelly Flinn's lies about her adulterous affair with a man married to a fellow servicewoman: "I mean, get real.... I think it's unfair."

Observers say the starkest, most thoroughgoing change in the character of Annapolis came after Congress passed (without a single hearing) an appropriations bill forcing the service academies to admit women.

As one critic has noted, whenever there is a demand that society and the military move to accommodate themselves to each other, it will inevitably be the military that does the moving—lowering its standards, rather than getting the bar for behavior raised in civilian society. So what happens to a place that Melissa Hawley says "just totally changes your life around," and where Jason Saglimbene says he's "definitely being pushed to limits," if it begins to go the way of other cultural institutions?

Some say the Naval Academy is already there. It's been in constant transformation since its founding; it is a place that is defined by the company it keeps, and a thousand new people arrive every year, importing some of their own background to the place. But observers say the starkest, most thoroughgoing change in the character of Annapolis came after Congress passed (without a single hearing) and President Gerald Ford signed into law an appropriations bill forcing the service academies to admit women.

Opponents looked to Douglas MacArthur for direction on the purpose of the service academies. "Your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable," he had told the West Point Class of 1962. Academy residents were being "trained to fight; yours is the profession of arms." All other things were merely "corollary."

Combat, argued the critics, was no place for daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers. Jacqueline Cochran, the test pilot, aviatrix, and leader of the Women's Air Service Pilots during World War II described the idea of women at the academies as a "ridiculous" one. It would fatally alter the academy experience, and "harden" the women to life, comparing it to her experience as a child working 12 hours a night in a cotton mill without shoes. "I don't think that is the way women should be brought up," she declared.

Those in Congress pushing for women in the academies—such as Representative Pete DuPont (R-Del.) and Senator Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.)—were swept up in the momentum generated by the Equal Rights Amendment in the early 1970s. Six House bills proposing the change were introduced between 1972-74. A lawsuit that charged the academies with violating equal protection and due process was filed in an attempt to force the issue. Proponents argued that no branch of the military was without female officers (indeed, some were already teachers at the academies) and allowing women to enroll as cadets was the only way to guarantee their opportunities for promotions. It was a new way of looking at the military: as a career ladder, with a "glass ceiling" that conspired against women just like in any cor-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poration. The armed forces had to become an equal opportunity employer, and that meant they had to be at the academies where the military ethic was instilled most intensely.

When President Ford signed the bill on October 7, 1975, it marked, in the words of journalist Brian Mitchell, "the high-water mark of the American feminist movement, the crest of a 15-year wave of legislative action." Back in Annapolis, it seemed more like a *tsunami* had hit. One of the central, age-old reasons for men to aspire to heroic greatness, the one that would cause them to go into battle and bleed and die, was now there, serving right alongside them. Consistent, uncompromising standards of performance began to be altered. And new emotional and sexual distractions, never before faced by men being formed into warriors, began to appear.

Yet the politicians insisted that everyone pretend as if nothing important had changed. As Mitchell observed, "Women brought the world into the academies—the world with all its mystery, romance, jealousy, and pain; with its flirting, and with its fumbling in a private darkness." Life in Annapolis would never be quite the same.

You are here to become a member of a great fighting force, one ready and willing to defend our nation against any enemy. You may never be called on to give your life; you may never strike a blow against a seen or unseen enemy, and yet, you must be ready to do just that....

A great deal is expected of you; the standards set for you are high, as they should be. You must and will meet these standards set for you in the United States Navy.

—from *Reef Points, The Annual Handbook of the Brigade of Midshipmen,* 92nd edition

The first experience incoming midshipmen have is standing in line, waiting. Last July 1, Melissa Hawley, Jason Saglimbene, and 1,243 other 18- and 19-year-olds waited for uniforms. For books. For haircuts. And for, the ideal goes, a new life. According to *Reef Points,* the function of the first seven weeks that "fourth classmen" spend at the Academy is to "bridge the gap" between civilian and midshipman life.

But at one time, the point seemed to be to make the gap even wider. One old report amusingly compared the arrival of plebes to those who go to Hollywood to make it big. The first thing you undergo in both places is a screen test. The Annapolis version was unique: Plebes were exhaustively photographed to determine their physical imperfections and peculiarities, such as a swayed back or a tendency to hold their heads slightly forward. Good posture, it was said, increased morale and efficiency. Plebe companies—and during the school year entire battalions—would have contests over which was most scrupulous about maintaining good posture.

Today the only photographs taken of new arrivals are the ones snapped by parents as they say good-bye. (The Academy does take a picture if a plebe has a tattoo; the shot is sent to the Department of the Navy so it can be determined whether the design is acceptable.)

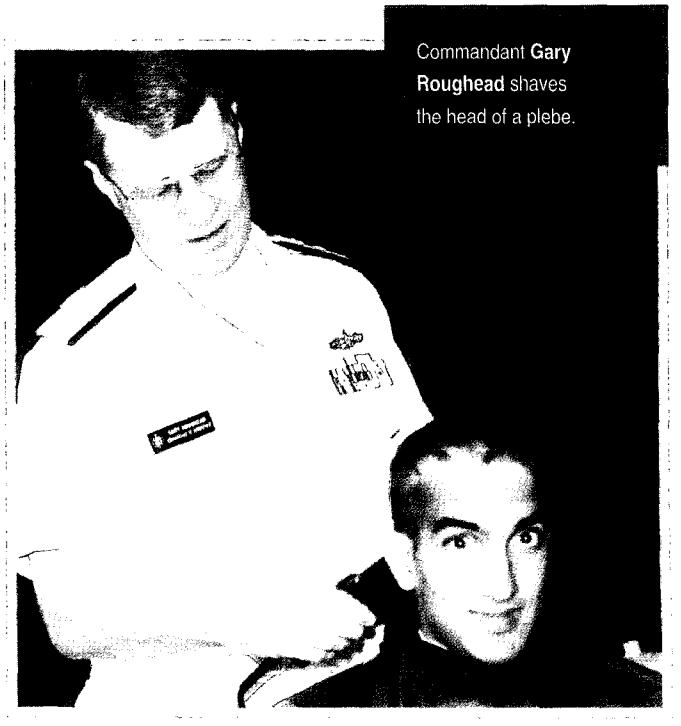
Although most of plebe summer training is off-limits to observers, very little exists today that remotely resembles the kind of grueling pressure that once took place. Hazing has been forbidden. Physical training is lighter. The psychological environment is less stressful. But does this kinder and gentler immersion produce good results?

Annapolis officials seem pleased to receive guests. The Academy has become one of the national capital area's most popular attractions, welcoming one and a half million visitors a year, and there is an elaborate visitors' center on the grounds where tourists are treated to a slick, Academy-produced documentary, "To Lead and To Serve," and other displays. Officials graciously cooperated with *TAE*'s requests in our many investigative visits to Annapolis as reporters. They arranged scores of interviews, chronicled the history of the institution, trumpeted the SAT scores of those admitted, and patiently explained many details of academy operations.

At times, though, it seems as if a strange, almost "Stepford Wives" mood pervades the place, a world where one can't be certain whether everything is completely perfect, or terribly awry. Visiting with the new commanding officer of the midshipmen is at times a little Orwellian. Gary Roughead is a 47-year-old admiral and graduate of the Class of 1973. After his tour as commandant, Roughead will be a prime candidate for a top Navy leadership position. Eventually, Chief of Naval Operations isn't out of the question.

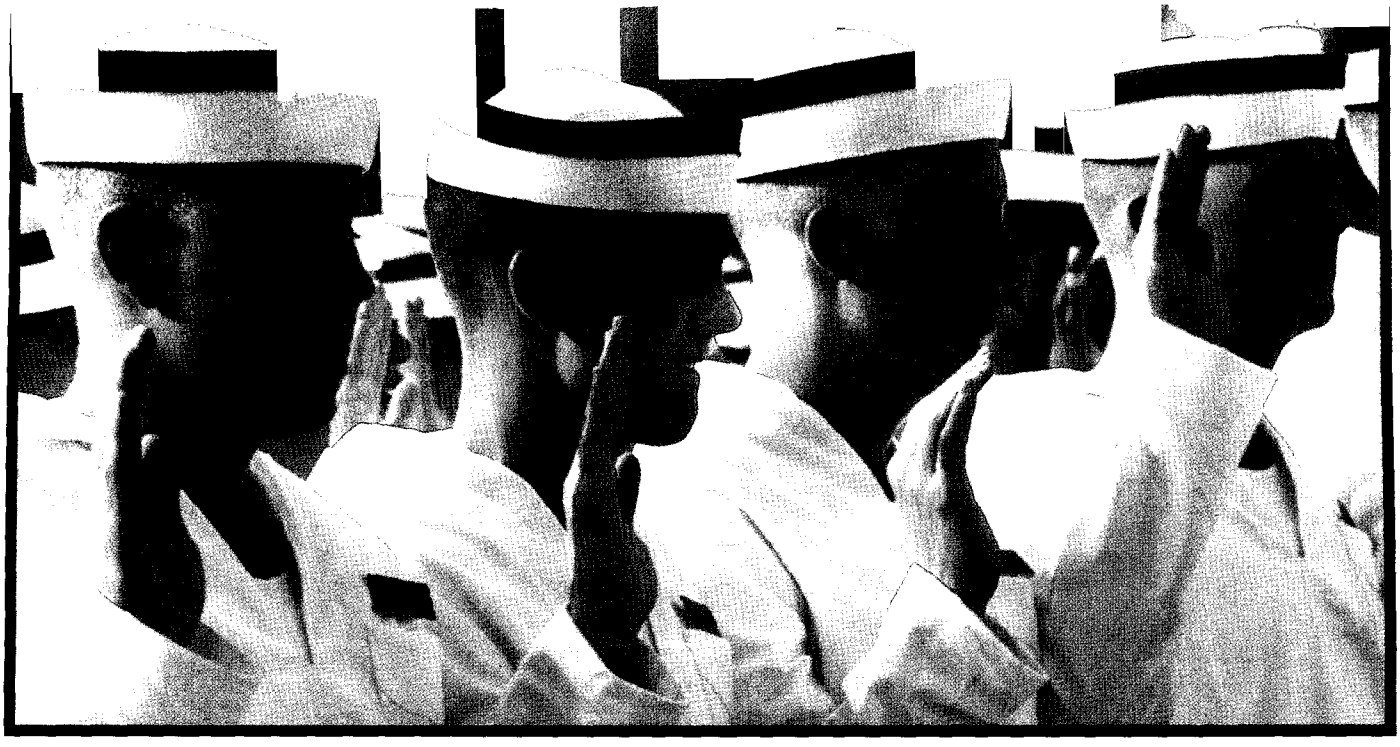
One of Roughead's strongest selling points for the Pentagon is that just before coming to the Academy last August he commanded the *U.S.S. Port Royal,* the first cruiser in the Pacific fleet to allow women into its crew. He seems especially sensitive to inquiries about whether women have changed the Academy. "There are those who say we're less rigorous now than we used to be," he says. "I take exception to that. Physically, I believe our program is more demanding." Perhaps Roughead has really convinced himself of that.

The specifics are worth looking at. Before 1976, midshipmen faced the Gymnasium Requirement Test, and curiously,



Commandant **Gary Roughead** shaves the head of a plebe.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



plebes had it easiest. (Today, the opposite is true: regulations become less stringent the closer one gets to going off to the fleet.) Each had to run 440 yards in 70 seconds; climb a 16-foot high rope, hand over hand; vault a bar as high as his chest; perform two somersaults; do three dips on the parallel bars; complete a seven-foot, three-inch standing broad jump; swim using any style for five minutes; swim for 80 yards using the four basic strokes; and in an attempt to simulate climbing aboard a ship plebes had to jump and clutch the edge of a seven-and-a-half-foot high shelf and then clamber onto it without using a wall or any other support.

To be an effective servant of the people, the military must concentrate not on the values of our liberal society, but on the hard values of the battlefield.

The incentive to pass the test was strong: If a midshipman failed any portion of it, he was placed on the Academy's "Weak Squad" or "Submarine Squad," stripped of his liberty, deprived of his fall break, and held back from graduation until he was successful. As one observer put it, "Few delinquents fail to make the grade within ten days when confronted with this penalty."

Boxing, which taught mids to absorb and inflict punishment while constantly evaluating an opponent's weak points, was required for three years, and students were given instructions in the same ring, specially purchased, where Gene Tunney defeated Jack Dempsey for the world heavyweight title. Eight wrestling lessons were also mandatory for plebes during their first year.

But as of this spring, mids were given only two Physical Readiness Tests annually, requiring merely sit-ups, push-ups, and a short run. Women do 22 fewer push-ups than the men, and get an additional two minutes and ten seconds for the mile-and-a-half run compared to the men. Classes in karate and self-defense may now be substituted for boxing and wrestling.

If a high-ranking Academy figure such as Admiral Gary Roughead were to admit that physical standards have had to be lowered because women have less skeletal weight, muscle mass, upper-body strength, aerobic capacity, and endurance stamina than the average man, it would disrupt the image of diversity and equal opportunity that the Pentagon wants (and its political overseers demand). And shrinking physical demands are only the beginning.

Another idealized image Academy officials strain anxiously to present is the notion that men and women in their late teens and early twenties can live in very close quarters for long periods under high stress without having human nature take its course. As novelist Tom Wolfe recently observed, "Thirty-five years ago, if any public figure had suggested that we ought to have an institution called the co-ed dorm, in which downy nubile young things and young men in the season of their rising sap would live together, not only in the same buildings but on the same floors along the same corridors, where they would share toilets and shower rooms, such a person would have been looked at as if his eyebrows were being eaten away by weevils." And if the notion of male and female co-residency was once viewed as problematic, then the idea of men and women training for and fighting wars together would have been regarded as preposterous.

I asked Roughead about his experience on the *Port Royal,* the model for his new job. "When I would go down to breakfast in the morning, about the time the ship was beginning to stir, I would look down the passageway and see men and women in bathrobes, going back and forth, and nothing was happening," he says.

One of the last times the Navy publicly defended that same claim was in the early 1990s with the destroyer *Acadia.* The 1,250-member crew had 360 women aboard. They had key responsibilities such as operating machine guns, working the fire detail, and transporting Tomahawk missiles to combat ships. But when the cruise was finished, things looked more like the Love Boat than PT-109. Ten percent of the women had been evacuated because they had become pregnant on board. One report quoted some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women saying the wild parties and sex became so routine that no one paid any attention to it. Not that there haven't been reforms: One recently instituted Navy regulation forbids both sexes from sleeping naked or in lingerie aboard ship.

Observers who are worried about the recent deterioration of academy standards yet doubtful that the law admitting women will ever be changed have suggested adopting a policy similar to the Marine Corps: Train the sexes separately. Put men and women in different wings of Bancroft Hall instead of across the corridor from each other. But this inspires no interest in Roughead. "I don't want to talk about the Marine Corps. They understand their culture and requirements better than I do," he says.

"I'm not sure, nor is anyone else here, what exactly is the direction and objective of the ethics course," a professor admitted.

But does Roughead understand the culture at the Academy today? David White has been a professor in the English department since 1981, and he believes that many of the sexual problems the Navy has had are also prevalent at the Academy. "I've learned a whole lot about what goes on over in Bancroft," he says. "The difficulties, the cover-ups, the way things are administered. It's constant turmoil."

More of that turmoil erupted earlier this year when an example of how "nothing was happening" in Bancroft Hall made news. On a sultry afternoon last July, Commandant Roughead hosted a sit-down outdoor dinner on Academy grounds for the plebe detailers, the upperclassmen assigned to supervise the newly arrived freshmen. The dinner, served with wine for those mids over 21, was a chance for the approximately 300 who attended to celebrate what they had accomplished that summer with the men and women who would eventually be their successors. For the seniors, it was a last gasp of freedom: In less than a year they would all be out in the fleet, fulfilling their service obligations as graduates.

Hannah Kessler was enjoying herself. The daughter of a retired naval officer, she was the second in her family to go through the Academy, and she didn't want the night to end. So Kessler and three other midshipmen decided to walk a few blocks to downtown Annapolis where the bars would still be open. The wine from dinner, and then the drinks at the bar, apparently began to take their toll on Kessler. According to one who was there, "She sat on men's laps, blew into and kissed the men's ears, and was seen kissing a second lieutenant. She was also seen with her arm around Midshipman Pilson."

Unlike Kessler, Michael Pilson, Jr., wasn't from a Navy family. Navy culture was new to his black, middle-class family from Houston, where his father worked as a geophysicist at Pennzoil. Pilson's dream through high school was to become a Navy flier. Being an honors student with extracurricular activities such as varsity soccer and music got him into the Academy; now he had less than a year to go before graduation.

It was approaching ten o'clock when Kessler, Pilson, and several other mids decided Annapolis was a bit slow on a Thursday night; Baltimore was beckoning. They walked back to Bancroft to prepare to leave town, and when they met again in the lobby to depart, Kessler was missing. Pilson told the others he needed to go back to his room to get more money and use the toilet. On his return, he stopped in Kessler's room to invite her to join them.

"She was kissing me and asked if I would get into the bed with her," said Pilson, who says he then had intercourse with her. But Kessler herself says she recalls none of this. She admits she was heavily intoxicated, but only remembers waking up early in the morning, seeing Pilson in bed with her, and screaming for help.

After Kessler told the company advisor her story, and Pilson admitted to having sex with her, Academy officials quickly determined there was insufficient evidence to penalize Pilson for rape—it appeared to be a "he said, she said" case where both parties admitted inebriation. Nevertheless, before any formal investigation or trial could be held, Pilson was dismissed from campus and transferred 50 miles away to the Washington Navy Yard, where he was assigned to paint detail. He was accused of violating a "military protective order": Kessler reportedly didn't feel comfortable constantly seeing the midshipman she had accused of rape across from her in the dining hall or in the brigade. "His guilt was determined even before the investigation was completed," says Michael Pilson, Sr., who then asked Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R) and Houston-area Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D) to intervene on his son's behalf.

The heat from Capitol Hill caused administrators to rethink their decision; Pilson was reinstated as a student but housed in barracks with enlisted men across the Severn River. "He couldn't have a computer, and wasn't allowed to eat on campus. They rendered him academically ineffective," says his father.

He had also become a defendant in the Academy judicial process, spending the majority of his time preparing for an Article 32 proceeding, the Navy's version of a grand jury hearing. The story that unfolded there raised questions about Kessler's version of events, and has been especially troublesome for Academy officials.

One midshipman said he felt Kessler was also soliciting sex from him. But the two midshipmen who observed her in her dorm room that evening proved to be most damaging. One testified he entered to find Pilson half dressed and on her bed. Kessler was in the toilet, and when she returned, didn't complain or ask for help. The other midshipman was walking down the hallway and said that through the partially open door he observed Kessler standing in the room clothed only in a bra and panties, casually conversing with a man who was probably Pilson. "No one contests that intercourse occurred," says Pilson's lawyer Fred Bauer. "The only reasonable conclusion is that consensual sex happened."

The military judge who presided over the October hearing said that while he didn't necessarily find Kessler lacking in credibility, he believed her story to be "less reliable than those two witnesses because of her level of intoxication and the apparent neutrality of the latter witnesses." But sex in the barracks is forbidden, and Pilson had already confessed to what is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

certainly a dismissable action. So even though Superintendent John Ryan admitted Pilson had not committed a crime, Pilson was expelled from the Academy for violating Brigade regulations prohibiting sex. He returned to Houston and is now working on a K-Mart loading dock.

Kessler, however, was graduated in May and is headed to surface warfare school. Protesting this apparent unfairness, Pilson's lawyer has petitioned the Secretary of the Navy to allow his client to return to the Academy, "with the penalties being proportionate to the actions taken against Kessler." If the request is denied, Pilson will have to reimburse the Navy for an estimated $70,000 in educational expenses.

Teaching moral absolutes goes against the grain of every prevailing tendency in modern academics. While Annapolis is less crippled in this area than the typical university, it has the same disease.

Naval Academy rules say a wide range of behavior in this area, not just sex on campus, is grounds for expulsion. Even a close friendship between two people of the same sex might qualify as intolerable fraternization if the relationship blurs the line between leader and subordinate. Another recent case involved Birk Billingsley. The Firstie (senior) admitted to falling in love with a plebe in his squad and trysting with her off Academy grounds. Perhaps taking his cue from the Commander in Chief, Billingsley said there had been "sexual relations" but "no sex." But he and the plebe didn't slide by as their Commander had: The Academy said the affair violated guidelines because Billingsley was his girlfriend's supervisor. The plebe resigned, and Billingsley was dismissed in April. His Navy tab: $93,000.

Professor White believes that the anxiety among male midshipmen is caused by the double standard that appears to be at work in cases such as Michael Pilson's. Coupled with that is what Admiral Van Orden calls the "emasculation" of the institution: Many of the traditions and training practices through which the men once expressed their masculinity are now prohibited. One example that received attention in 1992 involved marching chants.

Carol Burke, at the time a departmental colleague of White's, wrote a story for *The New Republic* in which she quoted from chants used at the Academy. Some of the sophomoric humor in these ditties was violent or pornographic. White confirms that rough cadence calls existed on the campus. They were banned after the Burke story was published.

But boys will be boys, and mids simply found other more destructive ways to release tension. White says that when you remove from men every traditional form of expressing their masculinity, "they're going to begin to express it in invalid and inappropriate jokes," and "through vulgarity, drinking, and violence. The problem they're having with the men now is that they can no longer be masculine by being honorable, noble, marching around carrying guns, and fighting on behalf of the weak and defenseless. They do it now by drinking, driving too fast in cars, and being vulgar."

Burke, who has since left Annapolis, made numerous other assertions against "deep-rooted misogynistic traditions" at the Academy. She complained, for example, that some seniors in the final class without women had inscribed "LCWB"—"Last Class With Balls"—on their class rings (a member of that class absolutely denied this to *TAE*).

The Academy response to Burke's article was telling. Admiral Thomas C. Lynch (whom naval investigators later said had tried to help football players get out of a 1992 cheating scandal without being penalized) was then the superintendent. He responded with a letter to the editor promising that the Academy now possessed "heightened personal and institutional awareness and sensitivity to gender issues." More female officers had been hired. A "zero tolerance program" for "gender and ethnic discrimination" had been implemented. He and his assistants were going to "change attitudes and correct biases."

But what officials really seem to be trying to change and correct is human nature. As the Shakespeare plays the mids study in David White's course show, men and women aren't the same. In *Taming of the Shrew,* Petruchio and Katherina are two very differentiated creatures, and there's a reason for the war between them. In *Coriolanus,* Volumnia—who symbolizes the way women defend virtue and promote a sense of duty, honor, and country—proudly raises her son to be a warrior. "I teach Shakespeare," says White. "I have to get to the differences between men and women. It's one of his basic themes."

Because of the scandals, sexual and otherwise, that have plagued Annapolis over the last decade, the administration is now working hard to ensure that such incidents are rare. As Admiral Van Orden says, "discipline and effective leadership start at the top," so penalties for misbehavior should be "swift and decisive" and "supported by higher levels of the chain of command." But just the opposite occurred when a midshipman was expelled for lying and the Secretary of the Navy then reversed the punishment.

The main effort now underway at the Academy that attempts to reverse honor and discipline violations is a new required, three-credit course called "Ethics and Moral Reasoning for the Naval Leader." It is the prototype for an entire ethics center soon to be launched. In it, civilian and military teachers lead mids through readings and discussions about a wide variety of situations from which the mids are supposed to draw moral lessons.

An examination of the syllabus for last spring, interviews with the department chairman and professors, and visits with mids and instructors reveal that the course is an amorphous blend of dozens of philosophies and concepts, all presented as equal to one another. There is no right or wrong answer to most of the questions posed, and so midshipmen one year out of high school are treated to a relativistic carnival of moral theorizing. "We don't promote any ethical stand," one of the teachers, Michael Cortese, says proudly. "The way we sort of teach it is not that there's a certain theory of philosophy that we're saying is the one. It's sort of, Here's something you can put in your bag of tricks."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

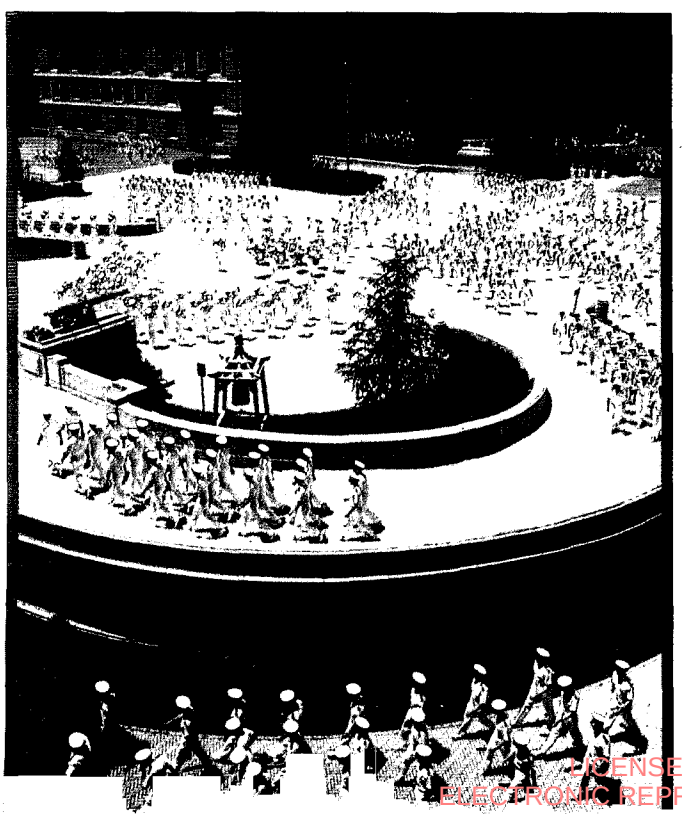
The textbook, *Ethics for Military Leaders,* contains a curious blend in its weekly topics. For example, "Just War Theory" offers an excerpt from Thomas Aquinas and a 1995 speech by President Clinton on Bosnia. A section on the death penalty has readings against it—Supreme Court opinions by Justices William Brennan and Thurgood Marshall—and a very short article by Ernest van den Haag arguing for it as a deterrent.

The course has attracted its share of criticism. Some see it as a public relations ploy the administration can tout when questioned about measures taken in response to the decade's scandals. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles Krulak, has said publicly that the course is an academic morass. "Both midshipmen and I question the form. The atmosphere is full of theoretical classes and seminars...mumbo jumbo about Freud, Kant, and utilitarianism...but short on straight talk, responsibility, accountability, and example," he stated in a May 11 speech to the Naval Academy Alumni Association's D.C. chapter.

One Academy grad echoed the sentiment of many when he said, "From my experiences with the First Marine Division, Kant and Freud don't compute." One of the most revealing comments on the effort came not from an outside critic but from a professor in the department itself who told me, "I'm not sure, nor is anyone else here, what exactly is the direction and objective of the course."

There seems to be a determination throughout the Ethics and Moral Reasoning program to avoid being "judgmental." A comment from a third-class middie that appears on the back cover of the textbook reads: "The ethics course has taught me not only to realize these differences in our beliefs, but to respect and work with those differences."

Of course, teaching moral absolutes goes against the grain of every prevailing tendency in modern academics, and Annapolis is probably less crippled in this area than the typical university. But that is small solace, particularly given the importance of moral character in governing the military life that graduates are headed for. "Those courses are completely worthless," says David White. "The whole worldview they're bringing in is relativistic"—and inspired by '90s slogans like, "You either control your attitude or it controls you."



Once, the Academy was a place where students didn't need a textbook to learn moral fundamentals, ethics, and leadership. As Van Orden puts it, "You just got caught up in it, and learned from experience." Of course, in years past, young men entered Annapolis's gates from a less de-moralized culture. Academy officials are right to recognize that some mids now arrive without basic senses of right and wrong and personal accountability. But today's official efforts to cure these deficiencies seem far too timid and compromised by non-military priorities to succeed in reliably planting a sense of duty, courage, and honor in breasts where those fundamentals are lacking.

The process of finding tomorrow's naval leaders and heroes begins in Leahy Hall, under the supervision of David Vetter, the dean of admissions, graduate of the Class of 1967 and a retired colonel in the Marine Corps. Vetter's committee of Navy officers reviews close to 10,000 applications per year from young men and women seeking a different life from their peers.

The committee meets in a large room where portraits of Admirals Moorer, Zumwalt, and Holloway peer down on eight back-to-back conference tables, ringed by uniformed decision-makers. Just before Vetter went in to join them, I asked him about the Annapolis he recalls from his years in the Yard. He pauses for a long time, remembering, then talks about a company reunion party held at his home, marking 30 years since graduation. "I love this place. And yeah, we were kind of caught up in the brotherhood thing, and you know, swaggering. I think we were pretty good lieutenants when we went to Vietnam. But that was a different time. Kids now wouldn't put up with that stuff."

And therein may lie the story of the United States Naval Academy.

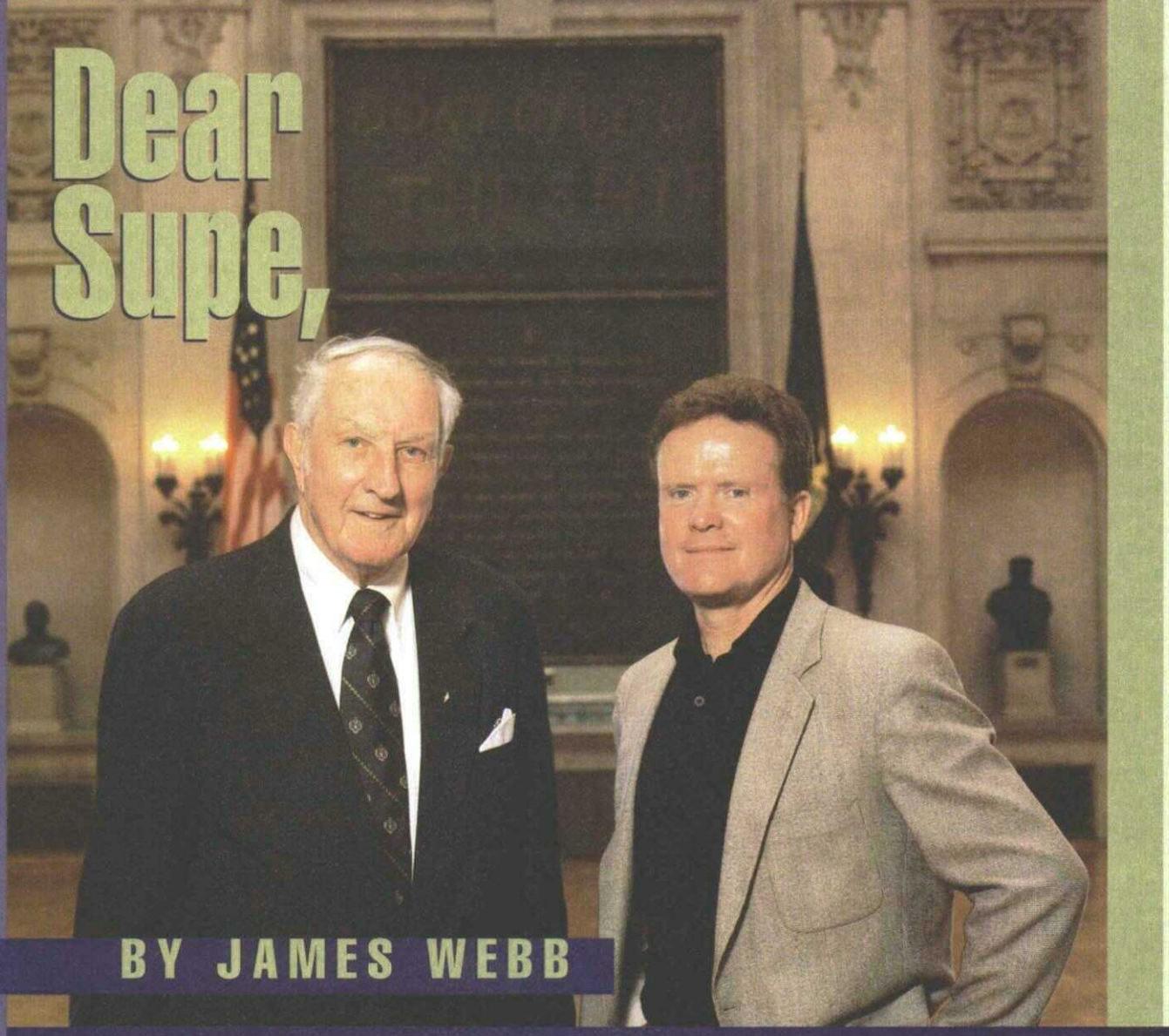
Two years ago Vetter was the commanding officer of the Navy-Marine ROTC unit at the Virginia Military Institute. So I mentioned the recent comments of VMI Superintendent Josiah Bunting III that the admission of women there changed the place forever. Bunting described it as "the saddest story I have ever heard," and one sure to "have an effect on the efficiency of a fighting unit." Why hadn't we heard anything like that from Academy leaders, I asked?

He stood up, looked at me, and smiled a melancholy, knowing smile. He seemed to realize that because of his position in our contemporary armed forces, and the era in which they operate, he could never, ever give voice to similar sentiments. "It's a different place down there. 'VMI Do or Die.' All that stuff."

And he walked down the hall, past a photograph hanging there of the *U.S.S. Arizona*, ablaze in Pearl Harbor. It was a picture that somebody took 57 years ago.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dear Supe,



Dave Scavone

BY JAMES WEBB

*James Webb was graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968. For his service in Vietnam as a Marine lieutenant he was awarded the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts. He went on to earn a law degree from Georgetown, then wrote several novels of war and military life, including one set at the Academy (*A Sense of Honor*). During the Reagan administration he served as Secretary of the Navy. His latest novel,* The Emperor's General, *takes place in Douglas MacArthur's Japan. Below he offers the man who presided over his military education a few thoughts on what those hard days at Annapolis in the mid '60s taught him.*

MEMORANDUM

To: Rear Admiral C. S. Minter, USN (Ret'd)
Former Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy

From: Captain James H. Webb, Jr., USMC (Ret'd)
U.S. Naval Academy class of 1968

Subject: After-action report

Sir:

This is in response to your letter of 12 May 1964, congratulating me on my acceptance to the Naval Academy and outlining my education and training should I report for duty as a midshipman. Please excuse the 35-year delay, but I did in fact report for duty, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that I have had a busy time of it ever since.

As you instructed, when I received your letter I gave it my *close personal attention* (italics yours), so that I might fully understand what would be required for me to commence a *career in the United States Naval Services* (italics yours), with the understanding that the Naval Academy *exists for this purpose only* (italics, you guessed it, yours).

That was a great letter, Admiral. It was honest, unapologetic, and immensely challenging. You might imagine the impact on a young man just past his eighteenth birthday to receive such a message, written by an admiral in the most powerful and well-led navy in the world, who like so many of his peers had cut his teeth in the dramatic and punishing arena of World War II. Reading

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opposite: Admiral Minter, left, with James Webb in Memorial Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy.

about the struggles of that war had formed the template of my childhood. The theme song from *Victory at Sea* coursed through my brain as I opened the envelope. Film footage from great naval battles danced before my consciousness, as familiar to me as MTV music videos are to the children of today. I knew that you and others whom I might soon meet—and better yet, serve under—were at the forefront of the greatest battles in history.

And here arrived your letter, outlining the conditions under which I might be allowed to join you. I want you to know, even though you are long-retired, that your blunt warnings motivated the living hell out of me. To be perfectly honest, they also *scared* the living hell out of me (italics mine). I doubt you had some Deputy Assistant Secretary of How To Make Nice peering over your shoulder as you wrote about what would be expected of me and my future classmates once we were "sworn in to the Naval Service and commenced a career." If there had been such a Make Nice person in the Department of Defense in 1964, his or her authority would have ended somewhere between the E Ring of the Pentagon and the Marine guard at the Academy gate. For what do bow-tied academics and vote-groveling politicians know or care about the hard, usually thankless, and often messy task of finding and building combat leaders?

Unfortunately, we learned the answer to that question just a few years after you wrote your letter, when Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara turned loose his systems analysis Whiz Kids inside the Pentagon, treating the Vietnam War as if it were an Edsel to be conceived, designed, and marketed by Management (them and their bow-tied friends), while Labor (that means us) were supposed to remain quiet and do the dying and just keep those cars coming off the assembly line. But that is the subject of another memorandum.

Your letter. I love that letter. Even now, some 35 years having passed, I take it out and read it from time to time. It was not some cheering, recruiting-slogan attaboy for my having passed through the wickets of anonymity to try my hand at the elite Trade School that my non-Academy military father had always praised for the quality product it delivered to the operating forces. In fact, the only reference you made to the Academy instead of the Navy at large was to point out that "since the founding of the Naval Academy in 1845 its graduates have served their country with distinction in war and peace." That was it. No loud ring-knocking. No recitation of the long list of accolades. No need to parade out Nimitz, Halsey, Lejeune, and Rickover. The Academy existed to produce leaders, and everyone knew that.

Your focus was on the serious task of taking the raw material the nation sent forth every year and finding and developing leaders therein, for the good of the Naval Service and of the country. There were no euphemisms. Your ultimate goal was "to produce an educated leader of character, physically sound, and dedicated to the service of his country." There were no apologies when you warned that the plebe system was "traditionally tough; not by accident but by design." You explained that "This is a period of testing—a time to separate the performers from the non-performers. It requires midshipmen to produce under pressure, to stand on their own two feet, to respond instantly and reflexively to orders, and finally to meet the highest standards of conduct, honor, character, and morality."

There were no apologies when you warned that the plebe system was "tough not by accident but by design.... a time to separate the performers from the non-performers."

"The highest standards"—a severe and unforgiving gauntlet thrown at my young feet. And there were no promises of touchy-feely counseling sessions if we from time to time failed to meet those standards. You put the onus right back on us by warning that plebe year was "fully within the capabilities of those young men *who possess proper motivation*." (Italics...well, you know. You wrote it). And there were no seductive be-all-that-you-can-be invitations to come to the Navy to find the inner me. If I lacked this "proper motivation," you suggested, I should withdraw my application and pursue another career.

In retrospect it's almost surprising that I showed up after reading your letter. I was already doing quite well on an academic scholarship at one of the country's best universities, located not far from some of California's nicest beaches. I spent many a bleak and nostalgic night over the next four years looking back at what I had given up in order to answer your challenge. I had no desire to have your mandatory engineering degree shoved down my throat. I hated the exhausting viciousness of the plebe system, a regimen so punishing that more than one classmate told me years later he had come through Vietnam fine but was still having nightmares about plebe year. I considered it absurd to be losing even the most normal of college freedoms—no radio in my room for a year, no dating for a year, no riding in a car for nearly three years, no television privileges for three years, having exactly 40 seconds to be out of my bed when the reveille bells went off in the morning, suffering the unbroken, 24-hours-a-day scrutiny of every part of my conduct by those above me—the list, as you know, goes on and on.

But there was something else, not only in your letter but in the eyes of my father and in the hollows of my own subconscious. No, it was not simply the matter of a challenge to my pride—whether I was good enough to endure and triumph in this crucible. It was a summons, up from the depths of the past, glimmering before me like an unwelcome but certain promise: Our history showed that during my adulthood the nation would never be fully at peace, and would most likely at some point be at war. On my shoulders, should I be entrusted with the lives of other Americans in such circumstances, would be the burden of momentous decisions involving life and death. Would I be prepared to do my duty? As I grew older in this profession, I would be challenged to anticipate threat and response to aggression in an ever-changing world. Would I do my part to ensure we as a nation were strong enough to protect our interests and our allies?

The best way to prepare myself for these challenges was to immerse myself in them, both day and night. And so I packed my trash, said goodbye to my surf board, and headed east.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What do bow-tied academics and vote-groveling politicians know or care about the hard and messy task of building combat leaders?

I will admit my stomach did a quick, queasy turn as I crossed the Severn River bridge and peered over at the wide, flat grounds of the Yard. The cold grey buildings and the tall turquoise poles that marked the outer limits of Dewey Field seemed to delineate a neatly manicured federal prison. And I did not like it very much when the crisp-uniformed upperclassman wearing a red nameplate hit me hard in the chest after I walked out a door and into the true innards of Academy life. And I was more than a little bit amazed when in the course of one quick afternoon everything civilian in my life, from my clothes to my hair to my very speech patterns, were torn, shorn, and beaten out of my countenance. My first night in Bancroft Hall I cried away my youth, knowing that it would be nine years—half as long as I had already lived—before I could make another full decision about my life.

Through the long, dark winter of that first year, as our country slid ineluctably into war in Vietnam, I fell just as irretrievably into your rhythms. Memories visit me even today, mixed with pride and loss. Posting the watch at zero-five-thirty, wondering what was happening back at USC as the nearby stairwells began to fill with plebes jogging up and down the steps as they prepared for their reveille come-arounds. Trudging around Farragut Field and then Hospital Point in three pairs of sweat gear in the wintry pre-dawn darkness, watching the lights slowly come on in real homes just across the ice-clogged Severn River, desperately missing my family, then forcing my mind onto the professional questions that would soon be asked of me. Fighting to stay awake in class, all the while worrying more about what was going to happen to me at the hands of upperclassmen back in Bancroft Hall or at the tables in the mess hall than I did about the remote and seemingly arcane laws of physics and calculus. Days falling into weeks, never with sufficient sleep, feeling exhaustion seeping so far inside me that it seemed to rest like a lead weight inside my bones. Weeks falling into months without the opportunity even to talk to a member of the opposite sex. Asking myself over and over, why did I do this, and why did I not simply walk away and go back to a calmer, more enjoyable existence. And then remembering the proud and somewhat envious face of my own father, who would have given anything to have undergone this misery in order to better prepare him for the demanding task of a military career.

You did not lie to us, Admiral. You made it tough. You held the ring up there, always just a bit higher than we could reach. You held a mirror before all of our faces, daring us to look at ourselves and claim we saw a man who could compare with the great leaders of the past.

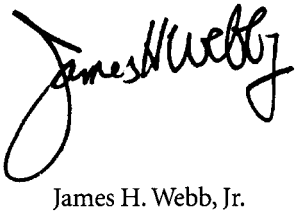
That lonely and demanding first year fell quickly into a second, then a third, and finally a fourth. The summers were, as they liked to say, "real world," with only a minimal amount of leave. One was spent cruising with enlisted sailors on two different ships out of Long Beach, transferring Marines and equipment from California to Hawaii for their further transplacement to the burgeoning war in Vietnam. Another was spent working under junior officers aboard an aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean just days after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, chasing the emergent and aggressive Soviet fleet, and monitoring the tinderbox of the Middle East. Inside the Yard, I learned many things, not the least of which was the gut-wrenching emptiness that comes when one discovers that good friends have died in battle thousands of miles away. One had to process this, as the psychologists would put it today. Could it really be that the hard-assed, optimistic friend who had lived just down the corridor and walked alongside me on the way to class and joked and crabbed about the adolescent rules of Mother B, and dreamed only of graduation and the future was now dead from a bullet through the stomach in the jungles of Southeast Asia? Was it really true that all of this preparation, all of the timeless lessons about loyalty and courage, could result simply in a quick, unrewarded death? Where did they tell us that in our books and lectures?

The reality was timeless. Our moment had come. We accepted it, inured ourselves to it, and finally came to expect it. This was the world we inherited, those who read your letter and responded to your call. Our fate was to have all of the responsibilities you promised us, yet none of the national adulation that had been given your generation of World War II. But that didn't matter. Our reward would be in answering the call to duty. We persisted, and retained our pride. Duty, always duty, in addition to resilience under pressure and persistence in the face of loss, that was what your regimens taught us.

You were gone by then, but the young man who walked out of your gates on June 5, 1968, at the height of a war that was tearing our country into shreds, was more than ready. Only some 840 of the nearly 1,400 who had answered the challenge of your initial letter had survived to raise their right hands and renew their oath, now as commissioned officers in the Navy or Marine Corps. By then Your Correspondent was infused with all the challenges of honor, leadership, tradition, and courage, hardened, as military people must always be, against the despair that comes from loneliness and the pain that derives from separation from one's loved ones. He was ready to lead, wishing only for the opportunity to serve. And in the baking jungles and the blood-filled rice paddies and the murderous mountains he was indeed called upon to serve.

And in service of the principles which have made our nation great, you may be assured, sir, that he is ready still.

Very respectfully,



James H. Webb, Jr.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is a slightly condensed version of Admiral Minter's actual 1964 letter to James Webb.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

12 May 1964

Dear Mr. Webb:

I extend my sincere congratulations upon your selection as a prospective midshipman and want to advise you of the education and training here at the Naval Academy. You are urged to give this letter your *close personal attention*, for you are not just entering college when you enter the Academy.

Each June the new plebes immediately commence a tough, demanding, but intensely rewarding four-year course of instruction to prepare them for a career in the *United States Naval Services*. The Naval Academy *exists for this purpose only*. Unfortunately, in the past some plebes arrived under the mistaken impression they could pursue studies leading to a degree in law, medicine, or some other essentially civilian professional field. Some few others came with mistaken thoughts of "free education" and no real desire for a naval career. Finally, there were some who entered not because they wanted to, but because someone else made the decision for them. Unhappily, many of those young men resigned or were discharged because they found they could not develop one essential ingredient for success at the Naval Academy—*motivation and a sincere desire for a career of naval service*. The sad point is that not only have they wasted their own time and that of the Academy, but they have prevented others who had the proper attitude, desire, and motivation from entering.

The Academy differs from most other institutions of higher learning because it has a more comprehensive mission. It offers not only sound academic education, but also physical and military training for a successful naval career. As a consequence, midshipmen live in an atmosphere considerably different from that found in college. Their life is a disciplined, military existence with few of the freedoms normally available to college students. Their working day begins with reveille at 6:15 A.M. and continues at a high tempo until taps, with a full and demanding schedule designed to develop to the fullest their mental, moral, and physical capacities. The ultimate goal is to produce an educated leader of character, physically sound, and dedicated to the service of his country.

During your first year at the Naval Academy you will be exposed to an exacting program of inspection, instruction, and correction known as "Plebe Indoctrination." The objectives of this system are forthright, demanding, and far-reaching. It is designed to accomplish the necessary transition from the civilian to the military way of life. Additionally, Plebe Indoctrination strives to increase the midshipman's professional knowledge, formal education, and proper study habits. Plebe Year is traditionally tough, not by accident but by design. This is a period of testing—a time to separate the performers from the non-performers. It requires midshipmen to produce under pressure, to stand on their own two feet, to respond instantly and reflexively to order, and, finally, to meet the highest standards of conduct, honor, character, and morality.

Despite its toughness, Plebe Year is fully within the capabilities of those young men who qualify for admission *and who possess proper motivation*. It is generally those who come for the wrong reasons who find Plebe Year too much for them.

My only purpose in writing this letter is to let you know just what is in store for you at the finest school of its kind in the world. So, *IF* you are willing to seriously consider the Naval Service as a profession, and *IF* you have a real desire to be a member of the Brigade of Midshipmen, and *IF* you are willing and capable of living up to the high standards demanded of every Member of that organization—*Welcome Aboard*! You have an exciting future in store for you. If not, I suggest you consider withdrawing and pursuing another career.

Today the United States Navy is the most powerful in the world, and it must remain so to ensure our freedom. To stay strong it must continue to be led by highly skilled and dedicated officers. Four years from now the Naval Academy Class of 1968 will make its contribution. I hope you will be one of that group. The Naval Academy stands ready to prepare you. All that is required is your dedication to the task.

Sincerely,

C. S. MINTER, JR.
Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy
Superintendent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alternatives

TO TODAY'S MILITARY ACADEMIES

The ROTC Edge

By John Bradford and Eli Lehrer

John Smith (his real name) faced a choice. He could trace his military lineage back to the Mexican-American War, and had he gone to the Air Force Academy he would have been one of its earliest second-generation cadets. Instead, he went to a well-known college's ROTC program. "I took a look at the Air Force Academy and realized that it was a bunch of tech-heads," he says. "I wanted to study politics before I began my military career, and the Academy wasn't the place to do it."

The country's service academies play an important role in producing good officers for America's military, but the Reserve Officers Training Corps—which combines military instruction with conventional undergraduate education at hundreds of civilian campuses—has some distinct advantages. For one thing, the three national academies graduate only about 3,000 officers a year—far less than the number needed. And for evidence good officers don't have to go to the service academies, look no further than Colin Powell, who went through ROTC at the City University of New York.

Partly because of the military's reticence on this issue, it is more difficult to compare ROTC with the academies than we would wish. There are, however, three good arguments for ROTC. First, it can often train equally good officers for a lot less money. Second, by its very nature, ROTC ensures a greater diversity in the officer corps. Third, ROTC provides commissions to potentially outstanding military officers who either can't get into the academies or have legitimate reasons for simply not wanting to.

On the question of relative costs, Buzz Beamon, an economist at the Naval Academy, tells *TAE* his research shows that academy training costs a good deal more than ROTC on balance. *U.S. News & World Report* has estimated that the academies spend as much as Harvard per student on what the magazine considers pure education, and they do so without the benefit of Harvard's massive endowment. Nearly every dollar they spend comes from taxpayers.

On the other hand, Beamon finds that officers coming from academies typically stayed in the military longer. In a lot of occupational areas, however, retention rates were as good for ROTC grads as for academy personnel. When it came to turning out submarine officers, for instance, Beamon's research shows the Naval Academy far exceeding ROTC's efficiency, while in some other specialties, the results are reversed. Beamon admits his numbers aren't perfectly accurate for technical reasons, but for all the statistical muddiness, it's reasonably clear ROTC programs can be quite cost effective when compared to academies.

For our own analysis of ROTC programs, we selected 12 geographically isolated colleges that ranked at or above the "highly selective" rating the academies receive in *Barron's* college guides. Using 1996 data, the most recent available, we found that per-student expenditures are far less at these colleges than at the academies—in some cases as little as a third. Although one shouldn't judge either the academies or ROTC on economic efficiency alone, the Defense Department might do well to extend research like Beamon's and find out exactly where both ROTC and the academies succeed most clearly, and where their performances could stand improvement. Success in certain occupational specialties might require academy training, while others could be handled far less expensively through ROTC.

Obviously ROTC trains future officers in a more civilian environment than the academies. Some believe that in our era of an all-professional military this could actually help bridge the growing divide between America's military and civilian populations. "There's a tremendous disconnect between military and civilian life," notes Stephen Wrange, a political science professor at the U.S. Military Academy. Mentioning thought-experiment essays that Army Colonel Alfred Dunlop has written describing a hypothetical American military coup in 2012, Wrange suggests this mutual estrangement needs to be addressed.

It's no small achievement, then, that in an era of declining military budgets ROTC programs on college campuses can improve the visibility of the military and increase public friendliness toward its principles. And ROTC is also good for the student population and campus environment. "The mili-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tary helps bring students into a rich historical tradition," admits Tom Hircshl, a left-wing sociology professor at Cornell. "It's a good thing to have on this campus."

One student we spoke with at a campus with ROTC suggested that some "ROTC rats" build somewhat insulated lives for themselves, and tend to socialize only with like-minded students. But the vast majority of students in ROTC live in a more open world than the men and women who go to the academies. Even if this more civilian environment makes people less qualified as officers—and there's no real evidence it does—it may help the military as a whole.

Our three academies could be converted into military "finishing" schools running 11-month programs that would produce many more officers, with deeper military training, for less money.

Better civilian understanding of the military has become more important as fewer and fewer Americans, especially among the highly educated, have had military experiences themselves. As recently as 1982, over half of all Congressmen had served in the military. Today, it's only a third, and these tend to be the older members. Barring a major war, it's likely that less than 15 percent of congressional representatives will have military experience by the middle of the next decade. The CEOs of the nation's largest companies are similar: In 1986, nearly half the heads of America's 500 largest companies had military experience; by 1997 it was less than a quarter. In the media, professions, and academe, military service is even rarer.

In short, people with the power to make and influence American military policy are less likely than ever to have first-hand military exposure. ROTC programs at America's colleges can't cure this problem, but they can reduce its severity—by extending across the military-civilian divide and acquainting at least some of tomorrow's civilian leaders with military counterparts. Although simply knowing people in the military is no substitute for personal experience, it is probably the best substitute in a world where shrinking defense budgets and an absence of major conflicts seem likely to keep the military small and mostly off the front page for the foreseeable future.

Although force shrinkage has actually accelerated America's tempo of military operation, the sort of fighting is much different than what was prepared for during the Cold War. Recent military operations have been either long-range attacks with missiles and planes or short, intense rescue and peacekeeping missions. In these sorts of missions, being able to understand the nature of tribal conflicts or to speak an obscure language may end up being as important as the ability to plot armored strategy. Indeed, a brief look at the more than 50 military operations carried out over the last decade shows the military operating in just about every cultural milieu and physical environment. Coupled with high-tech weapons and information gathering requirements, the emerging military demands may require many people whose education has been mostly civilian. The executives of such a military, at least, could learn many useful skills in a largely civilian environment.

A final argument on behalf of ROTC training is more nebulous but perhaps the most compelling: ROTC makes it possible for the military to attract a much wider variety of officers than it otherwise would. The academies feature narrow curricula heavily focused on the sciences. The armed forces particularly need people with technical skills, and even ROTC has significant scientific requirements: Navy and Air Force ROTC programs, for example, require two terms of calculus-based physics. But a military made up exclusively of scientists would have problems. The military replicates nearly every civilian profession at one point or another in its chain of responsibilities, and it needs at least a few people in a wide range of areas.

ROTC programs give the military access to students at even the most rarefied academic campuses. Although attending an ROTC program at MIT or the University of Pennsylvania does not provide the same depth of training in the traditions of military life that a cadet would receive at West Point, it may provide a slightly better intellectual education. Some very bright students who would love to do military service but are looking for something not available at the academies attend a top school with a ROTC program instead.

And at the other end of the spectrum, there are many students who do not have what it takes to get into the intensely competitive academies, yet still want to go to college and become military officers. Many young men and women who don't meet the exacting standards of the academies nonetheless have what it takes to make excellent officers. "I would have loved to go to West Point, but my grades in high school were only O.K., and in any case our local representative seemed a little too busy giving refers to friends," says Henry Jones, who today owns an auto body shop in the suburbs of Houston, Texas. Instead, Jones went to a public university and then did four years of military service.

America's three major military academies are a national treasure, and it would be foolish to cavalierly assume that ROTC can or should take their place. But it is equally foolish to believe that the academies can ever substitute for the different but equally valuable sorts of military education ROTC provides. The academies do not have a monopoly on virtue.

The cost advantages of ROTC may be significant. But even if ROTC cost more, we believe that the future realities of America's military requirement make it increasingly important that a large portion of tomorrow's military officers receive training in the largely civilian environment of ROTC. Increasing the budget and influence of America's ROTC programs could be the smartest path available to maintaining a strong U.S. military.

John Bradford, a Cornell ROTC graduate, is a second lieutenant in the U.S. Navy currently serving on the USS John McCain. Eli Lehrer is a contributing writer for The American Enterprise.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The British Approach

By David A. Smith

As a Naval Academy graduate, I have a great fondness for the institution and my four-year academy experience. But during the 40-plus years since I attended, many changes have occurred at the academies, many new programs for obtaining officers have emerged, and civilian colleges have changed significantly. In addition, an altered climate of opinion and reductions in defense spending increasingly threaten the present academy system. It may, therefore, be time for us to consider an alternative to the programs now offered at West Point, Annapolis, and Colorado Springs.

Before World War II, the academies were America's principal source of new officers. A fledging Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program also existed, and land-grant colleges were required to offer military training. Often the number of graduates from these sources greatly exceeded the military's needs, and excess graduates were either discharged or given a reserve commission.

Then, during World War II, the need for officers greatly exceeded what the academies and other sources were providing. Some academy classes were graduated early, and a multitude of new officer education and commissioning programs were established. Programs at civilian colleges were vastly expanded. Some emergency officer programs turned out "90-day wonders."

By the end of World War II, ROTC programs had become rooted at many colleges, and rapid training via officer candidate schools (OCS) was also well established within the military services. At the same time, the numbers of American youth attending college increased dramatically.

Today the academies are no longer the main source for military officers. They currently provide less than 17 percent of each year's newly commissioned officers. ROTC units now exist at 470 host colleges, and thousands of new officers come from the OCS and enlisted commissioning programs. As time goes on, more and more non-academy graduates rise to the general and flag officer ranks, even becoming the heads of their services and possibly Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

On average it costs more than $250,000 to educate each graduate from the three military academies—three times or more the cost of an ROTC graduate, and many more multiples of the bill for an OCS graduate. This disparity is occurring in a time of reduced military budgets and an increased need for funds to modernize our fighting forces and weaponry.

In recent years, the British military has experienced similar trends. So it's worth looking at how the British have adjusted their officer commissioning programs to meet changed conditions.

Historically, the British and the United States have used almost identical means to educate new officers for their armed forces. Officers for the British Army were educated at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, those for the British Navy at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth and the Royal Engineering College at Manadon. Officers for the Air Force were educated at the Royal Air Force College at Cranwell. But with a decrease in military spending, the British Ministry of Defence has established new commissioning programs that depart from tradition. Now the principal source of new officer candidates is youth who have already been graduated from civilian colleges, either through their own efforts or on a military scholarship. Selected candidates then enter one of the military colleges listed above for a training program lasting at most one year, after which they are commissioned. These military colleges no longer offer regular four-year academic programs as in the past.

The one-year military training complements the academic education candidates have already received at a civilian college, and gives them the necessary skills and indoctrination to serve as active duty officers. This is not unlike America's current OCS programs—in which college graduates are admitted for a 6- to 13-week training period—except that Britain's one-year program provides much more military training (more perhaps than even graduates of our present military academies receive). After the one-year military segment, new British officers go to their selected services and receive the follow-on technical training normally provided.

The cost savings to the British military are significant. And many more officer candidates can be put through the academies over a four-year period than previously. In addition, all commissioned officers start in comparable positions, because everyone has similar levels of military training prior to commissioning.

This British model could be followed at the U.S. military academies. Our three academies could be converted into military "finishing" schools with programs 10 to 11 months long that would produce a new graduating class each year approximately the size of the current student body. That is, approximately 12,000 officers could be commissioned from the three academies each year, instead of the current number of under 3,000. The concept is simple, straightforward, and less expensive than the current program. Still, there would be disadvantages as well as advantages.

On the advantage side, the contentious issue of what the military academies should teach—engineering vs. science vs. humanities—would disappear. The military services would select new candidate officers from already-minted college graduates, and could select whatever academic backgrounds they needed that year. Candidates would come from a broad range of schools and curricula.

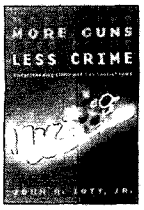
The even more contentious issue of women in the academies would be reduced or eliminated. Women officer candidates would be selected on the same basis as male candidates—the needs of the service. Both the women and men would be about four years older than the new cadets and midshipmen now entering the academies, a situation clearly easier to manage than having 17- to 22-year-old women and men living closely together for four years.

The candidates, 21-year-old or older college graduates, might be allowed to be married. Although their military training during this one-year period would be intense, there could be breaks and holidays to allow the candidates to maintain their family relationships.

The military services could train nearly all of their incoming officers through this program, for the four military services currently require about 13,000 new officers a year. ROTC programs at civilian colleges and universities might continue on a scaled-back level as two-year programs, with the intention of

continued on page 79

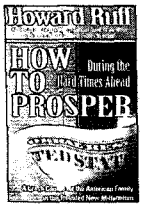
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



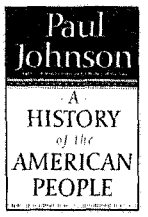
More Guns Less Crime - University of Chicago Law Professor John Lott argues that the liberal dogma about gun control is dead wrong. His in-depth analysis of gun control laws will lead you to one unequivocal conclusion: *more guns means less crime.*
Item #5155 Retail $23.00

America's 30 Years War - Historian and Hungarian immigrant Balint Vazsonyi warns that America is slowly becoming a socialist state. A survivor of Nazi Germany and communism, Vazsonyi has found Old World threats to our political system.
Item #5049 Retail $24.95

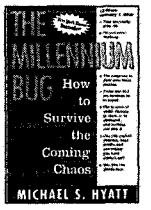
Year of the Rat - Did Clinton sell American secrets for Asian campaign money? Absolutely! Now, you can read the details of this chilling tale and discover how it was done. Clinton has been selling out American security for his gain *since 1992!*
Item #5070 Retail $24.95



How to Prosper During the Hard Times Ahead - In the coming Depression, life could be hell. Or, you can survive...maybe even prosper. Best selling author Howard Ruff tells you how to turn the coming crash into an ultimately profitable event.
Item #5205 Retail $24.95



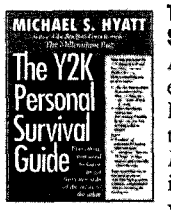
A History of the American People - In a single volume (1,136 pages): the American story in full. Paul Johnson's conservative outlook reverses a half-century of liberal mythmaking on issues from America's founding to the achievements of Ronald Reagan.
Item #4840 Retail $16.95 PBK



The Millennium Bug - This *New York Times* best-seller gives you everything you need to know about the causes and issues surrounding the biggest crisis in the *information age*. Learn about Y2K and how the coming chaos will impact your life.
Item #4881 Retail $25.00

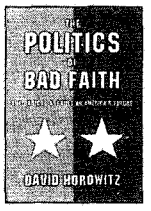
America's Real War - Orthodox Rabbi Daniel Lapin argues that Christian values are better for American society. He explores the Jewish faith and answers the question: Why are Jews so liberal? This book gives a new perspective to American religious ideals.
Item #5147 Retail $19.99

3 Books For $3
Right Here!
Right Now!
GET A 4TH FOR ONLY $7.95

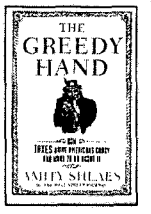


The Y2K Personal Survival Guide - Author and Y2K expert Michael Hyatt's follow up to *The Millennium Bug*. Get all the information you will need to prepare for and survive the looming crisis. Don't face the new Millennium without this book.
Item #5266 Retail $27.50

Gore: A Political Life - Reporter Bob Zelnick was fired from ABC News for digging deep into Al Gore's past and exposing the truth. Gore has been involved in illegal behavior and political dirty tricks for most of his life and is far from a humble politician.
Item #5240 Retail $24.95

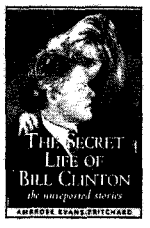


The Politics of Bad Faith - 1960s radical turned conservative, David Horowitz, reveals how the American political Left is quietly waging a new "cold war" on the nation. Liberals and "centrists" are undermining our founding principles in the guise of "social justice."
Item #5074 Retail $25.00



The Greedy Hand - American's are literally being taxed to death. Yet few understand the tax code or the "reforms" enacted by Congress. Now, Amity Shales examines the absurdity of the flawed system and offers ways to simplify and reduce taxes in America.
Item #5217 Retail $22.95

The Federalist - The ideas of John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison, captured forever in this collection of essays. Now, you can revisit their arguments for Constitutional ratification and the ideas that helped shape our government.
Item #5187 Club Exclusive $27.95



The Secret Life of Bill Clinton- From Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, the reporter the White House most fears - and with good reason - comes an assiduously documented expose of the crimes that have characterized the Clinton presidency as the most corrupt in history.
Item #4756 Retail $24.95

Betrayal - Renowned *Washington Times* defense reporter Bill Gertz accessed classified government documents and confidential sources to expose a national security nightmare. Bill Clinton's pathetic and naive foreign policy has weakened our military and undermined our national defense.
Item #5324 Retail $27.95

Benefits of Membership and How the Conservative Book Club Works

INSTANT SAVINGS! Join today and get 3 books for just $1 each plus shipping and handling. Then take up to two years to buy four more books at regular low Club prices (20-50% off retail) or three books over two years, if you've selected the new member bonus. After you have paid for your books, your membership can be ended by you or the Club. Plus you will also get opportunities to buy from our list of Superbargain books that the Club regularly offers. These books are offered at discounts up to 80% off!! (Sorry, Superbargain books do not count toward your book commitment.)

FREE BULLETIN! Up to 15 times a year you will receive the Club Bulletin packed with the kind of books you will want to read and own. Each Bulletin will include a Featured Selection chosen just for our Members.

SHOP AT HOME CONVENIENCE! When you receive your Bulletin you will have the chance to examine the many books of interest and read reviews for each. If you want to receive the Featured Selection, do nothing and it will be sent to you. If you don't want the Featured Selection, or you would like an alternate selection, simply indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it by the deadline date. Conservative Book Club is an easy way to build your Conservative library from the comfort of your own home.

100% SATISFACTION GAURANTEED! If you are not completely satisfied with any book, return it within ten days and receive a complete credit. Plus you will always have at least ten days to make your decision to receive a Featured Selection. If you ever have less than ten days, you simply return the book at Club expense for a full credit. One Membership per household please.

SEND NO MONEY NOW!

☑ YES! Please enroll me as a Preferred Member of the Conservative Book Club under the terms outlined in this ad. Send me the three books I've indicated and bill me just $3, plus shipping and handling. I then need to buy only four additional books at regularly discounted Club prices (20% - 50% off retail) during the next two years. *Please write book numbers here:*

☐ # ☐ # ☐ C0683-A-Y

☐ YES! I want to take advantage of the New Member Bonus! Please send me a 4th selection as I've indicated below. I understand I will be billed an additional $7.95, plus shipping and handling. I then need to buy only three more books at regular Club prices during the next two years.
Please write book number here: # ☐ C0683-A-X

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Signature _____

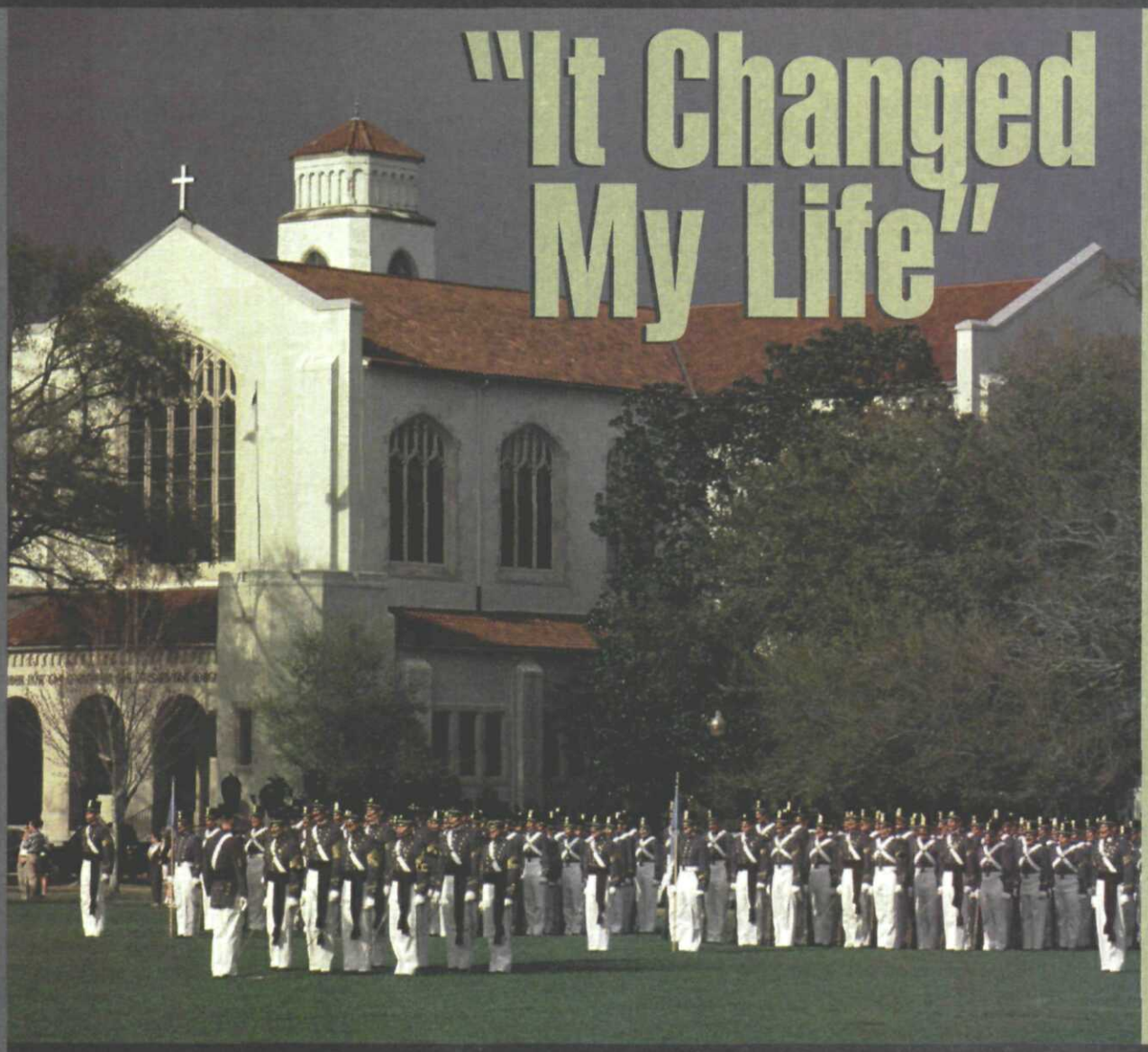
• Prices slightly higher in Canada • Membership subject to approval by the Conservative Book Club

Fill out this coupon and mail to:

1120 CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB P.O. Box 97196 Washington, DC 20090-7196

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It Changed My Life"



Corbis/Bob Krist

The Education of Lt. Kopacz

By Dave Geisler

When Paul Kopacz was four years old a relative who was a Marine died, but his family couldn't afford to travel to the funeral. "When I grow-up," he said, "I'm going to become a pilot so you can all fly free." • But Kopacz didn't know he had a hidden enemy: the learning disabilities dyslexia, dysgraphia, and attention deficit disorder. Dyslexia had haunted his father, who dropped out of high school and became an excellent mechanic, but lost out on his chances for better jobs because of it. Struggling to support his wife and three children on low wages, Paul's father developed an alcohol problem, which led to the end of the marriage. • Mrs. Kopacz struggled to support the family as a single mother. But she gave her children a strong faith in God and in service to America. The first two songs Paul learned were "Jesus Loves Me" and the "Marine Corps Hymn." Nonetheless, Paul's older brother drifted into trouble with the law. At age 17 he received an ultimatum from the judge: "I'm sick and tired of seeing you here. You have a choice: Go into the military or get a long sentence in jail." The brother chose the Marine Corps, and after boot camp he was a changed man. • But Paul had already picked up many of his brother's delinquencies. "I told him when he came home from basic training," Paul remembers, "what I had been doing—following in his earlier ways of stealing. That night he sat me down and taught me the meaning of honor." When Paul confessed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to things like breaking into a house and shoplifting toys, his brother cut him short: "That's stupid! That's *not* honor." From then on, Paul's older brother would mail him gifts and advice. "He would send me Marine camouflage clothes—but without the Marine Corps emblem. He'd tell me 'You've got to *earn* that. *That's* what honor means.'"

Paul was a popular kid in school, and he used his aptitude for humor to hide his learning disabilities. But in junior high a teacher became annoyed and started calling him stupid. Nevertheless, he kept being "socially promoted" to the next grade .

Male neighbors and the fathers of friends tried to mentor him. One took Paul to see the film *Top Gun,* which further fueled his ambition to fly. While he was in high school, Operation Desert Storm was launched. Paul didn't want to miss the experience and tried to enlist, but his mother wouldn't sign. The two compromised on his entering the Reserves. He told his Reserves instructor that he wanted to go to a service academy. "Who do you know, Kopacz?" an instructor asked. "Is your family friends with a congressman or senator? It's impossible; you better plan a more realistic military career path." But his strong faith led him to believe nothing was impossible.

Meanwhile, his bravery led him to intervene in an attempted carjacking. Just after Marine boot camp in December 1991, Kopacz was out running when he saw a suspicious character, who appeared to have pistol, grab an older man, hit him in the head, and grab his car keys. Kopacz hesitated, said a quick prayer, reached for a knife he had in his pocket, and chased the criminal. The crook jumped in his own vehicle and promptly ran Paul over. Though he feared his leg might be broken, Paul memorized the car's license plate, meanwhile administering first aid to the old man.

The crook was finally caught and sent to jail. He had committed the crime as part of a gang initiation and though all this happened at noon at a busy grocery store, no one else was willing to testify against him. Kopacz kept his heroism to himself, telling his family he had hurt his leg falling. When the *Los Angeles Times* tracked him down he refused to talk—because he was embarrassed he hadn't acted more quickly.

When Kopacz enrolled at Pasadena City College, he finally discovered his learning disabilities. The school's specialists taught him ways to cope and succeed: computers and audiotapes in particular helped him focus his attention and improve his learning skills. While in college, Paul continued in the Reserves and also trained as an Emergency Medical Technician.

Paul had often asked experienced Marines who they especially respected as officers. Many praised the men who had been schooled at The Citadel, South Carolina's prominent military academy. Though he'd never heard of the place, he looked into it, and liked the sound of its high standards and single-sex environment. For two months he composed a letter that he finally sent to The Citadel admissions committee:

Enclosed is my application for admission to The Citadel for the fall 1993 term. Though I don't ask for special consideration, I do ask that you recognize the following when making your determination as to my qualifications to attend The Citadel.

As a child I had an undiagnosed learning disability; I grew up being called stupid, and unfortunately began to believe that of myself. However, after I entered high school, I realized the desire and ability to succeed comes from within, and I have since applied myself with more determination than ever.

During my senior year of high school I joined the Marine Reserves. At the age of 17 in Marine Corps boot camp the drill instructor chose me to be in charge of 64 recruits all older than myself. At Marine Combat Training I was squad leader.

I have completed two semesters in college, and I am maintaining a 4.0 GPA as well as becoming an EMT. I hope I've shown you that I'm worth waiving the fact that I do not have a foreign language or high ACT score. We know that it does not take a genius to make a leader. It does take determination and a big heart and I have both.

Thank you for your consideration, Paul B. Kopacz

The impossible happened. Kopacz was accepted into The Citadel. He had no money for the cross-country flight, but when he described his situation to the Marines in Pasadena they arranged a seat on a military transport. At school, through hard work and determination, Paul continued to be singled out for high honors. "I was able to excel because I wasn't afraid of raising my hand and asking questions. There were no girls to look foolish in front of." During his breaks, the father of a roommate gave him a job at an ice factory that paid for his expenses.

Paul discovered the Marine Corps scholarship, which pays for two years of college in exchange for four years of Marine service, and won one to cover his final two years of tuition. The young man who had been pegged over and over as a low performer eventually achieved the high honor of becoming Company Commander at The Citadel in 1997.

One advantage his position at The Citadel gave Kopacz was a very impressive way to ask his girlfriend, Cherri, to marry him. Paul was in charge of an "arc detail," where the cadets practice marching as a color guard and setting up an arc of crossed swords. Paul put on his white dress uniform and asked Cherri to marry him by singing the song "Forever and Ever Amen" near the river in downtown Charleston. She said yes, and they walked through a detail of Marines under a canopy of crossed swords straight to a horse-drawn carriage Paul had waiting.

After graduating, Kopacz moved to the Marine Corps' Basic School for officers in Quantico, Virginia. He still dreamed of becoming a pilot, but the odds against him were long: Only six men out of the class of 228 could earn a flying slot. But Paul—who had picked up the nickname "Rudy," after the movie about the underdog Notre Dame student-athlete Rudy Ruettiger—made it. When it was announced he would have a chance to fly, the other officers cheered and "dog-piled" on him to celebrate.

But before he could begin flight training in Pensacola, Florida, Paul began to have problems with his eyes. His vision was only 20/50. He had to have at least 20/30 vision to enroll. Paul went to church at the Brownsville Assembly of God, told a prayer team how he didn't want to lose his dream, and hoped for a miracle. His next vision test turned out 20/30.

Today, Lieutenant Paul Kopacz—who could have ended up as another throw-away kid failed by our schools—enjoys a much different outcome. He is living his dream, thanks to hard work, determination, his faith, and the faith that a military institution called The Citadel showed in him.

Dave Geisler is a Los Angeles journalist.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Better Than Georgetown-Oxford-Yale By Pat Conroy

Though The Citadel can be a difficult place for outsiders to understand, its place in South Carolina's history is sacrosanct and revered. It is a military college of the first rank in a time when our nation needs more military colleges, not less. The Citadel seems to be in a state of either shock or depression after the recent debacle on the admission of women into the corps. It seems to have lost its bearing and confidence. But it remains one of the best colleges in the country.

Harvard, Yale, Berkeley and colleges like them can offer better educations than The Citadel, but they know nothing about the production of the whole man. They are not laboratories of leadership and camaraderie and discipline. They cannot impart the extraordinary benefits derived from a strict adherence to the military virtues.

In this strange time of corruption of ethics and values and standards, I think The Citadel is the best place in the country for a young man or woman to be. It is tough and structured and Spartan and wonderful. It requires lion-hearted, fearless young men and women with great inner strength and unshakable resolve. By entering the long gray line, they turn their backs on what is soft and absurd and decadent about college life in America. By becoming cadets and not just students, The Citadel will train them in the arts of becoming citizen-soldiers in a society that desperately needs more of them. By attending The Citadel, these young men and women join a proud and joyous family that has been tested by fire. It marks their singularity, their shining difference.

The Honor Code is moveable goods. It travels with you all your life.

I tell other writers that I meet in America that I received the best education for a novelist in the history of our republic. In the barracks I learned everything about the world I would need to know. When they tell me about fraternity or sorority parties, I tell them of marching to the mess hall every single morning after reveille sounded at 0615 hours. When they mention their class cuts at Vanderbilt or Duke or Cornell, I tell them I never had a single cut in my four-year career, and I attended every class I was signed up for every time it met except when I was representing the Bulldogs on the basketball and baseball teams.

While they were drinking beer and discussing literature, I could be found in my room during evening study period from 1930 hours to 2230 hours for five days a week, for four straight years. When they grow nostalgic for the long leisure hours of college life, I tell them about parades, Saturday morning inspections, drill, the required weekly haircut, the spit-shined shoes, the polished brass, the constant pressure that never let up once during the four years I called myself a cadet. While they were learning about college life, I was becoming a Citadel man, one of those who understand that discipline and honor and devotion to duty are not just words, but ways of life and paths to wisdom.

At the center of The Citadel education, the rock that anchors its soul, lies the Honor System. I found the Honor System simple and profound, majestic and life-changing: You will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate anyone who does. Those words struck me as beautiful then and even more beautiful today. They provide the frame of cadet life, and the Honor Code is moveable goods; it travels with you all your life. It is the part of The Citadel education that is deathless and not for sale. It is what you get at face value when you meet the alumni of my college. It is our password against chaos and disorder, the mark of our specialness.

I would trust with my life what Ernest Hollings or Joe Riley or John Palms or Claudius Watts told me. I would give the key to my house to the lowest-ranking senior private in last year's graduating class. I would entrust the contents of my safety deposit box to any fellow graduate.

In 1996 I accompanied President Bill Clinton and a delegation of 50 Americans to Ireland in an attempt to get the peace process started again. It was my proudest moment as an American citizen. President Clinton handled himself magnificently, and I thought my country could not be in better hands. I was ecstatic when he won his two terms as President, and I attended his last inaugural ball in Washington with the South Carolina Democrats. As South Carolina knows, I am a white Southern liberal of the kneejerk variety, and I thought that Bill Clinton represented the best of my breed.

I was wrong. I was terribly, terribly wrong.

Because of my Citadel education, I cannot accept a President so comfortable with lies, half-truths and evasions. This year has been agony for me as I watched the politician I admired putresce before my eyes. Because of the Honor Code, I believed the president about Gennifer Flowers, Paula Jones, Kathleen Willey, and Monica Lewinsky. I bought the whole package not because I am naive, but because I am a Citadel man and cut my teeth in a military society where our word was our bond and where our trust in each other in the barracks was such that it was against the rules to lock our doors.

I learned lessons at The Citadel that my President did not learn at Georgetown University, Oxford University, or Yale Law School. Until this year, it never occurred to me that I received a much finer education than Bill Clinton. He knows little about honor, responsibility, and character. The Corps of Cadets at The Citadel is the best place in the country to learn all you need to know about them.

Pat Conroy is the author of several bestselling novels and screenplays including The Great Santini, The Lords of Discipline, *and* The Prince of Tides. *This is adapted from a January 10, 1999 letter he wrote to the* Charleston Post & Courier.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pick A Free Issue

Subscribe or renew now and choose a FREE issue from our collection of greatest hits!

Start a one-year subscription to *The American Enterprise,* or extend your existing subscription (in either case at our standard one-year price of $28), and **we'll send you a gift at no extra charge.**

We'll even let you **choose** the gift you want.

Fill in your subscriber's information. Then mark the free back issue you'd like, and we'll send it at the same time we process your subscription order.

Copy or tear out and mail to
The American Enterprise,
1150 17th Street NW,
Washington, DC 20036

or FAX to 202-862-5867

(A $6 VALUE)

- ☐ **Whatever Happened to the Truth?** Christopher Hitchens, Christina Hoff Sommers, Lynne Cheney, and others dissect today's epidemic of lying. Also: Rudy Giuliani, George Bush, & others. (M/J '99)
- ☐ **How to Clean Up Trash TV** Answers from Michael Medved, David Horowitz, Joseph Lieberman, Steve Allen, and more. (M/A '99)
- ☐ **Is America Turning a Corner?** Startling new data on recent improvements in social trends. Plus: Lucianne Goldberg, Andrew Ferguson, and Mark Steyn look back at the Year of the Goat. (J/F '99)
- ☐ **Race** Exploding cliches on America's touchiest subject with Reggie & Sara White, J.C. Watts, Ward Connerly, & many others. (N/D '98)
- ☐ **Does Science Have All the Answers?** George Gilder, Charles Murray, Jerry Pournelle etc. tackle space, evolution, God. (S/O '98)
- ☐ **Will China Bury Us?** Conflicting answers to this crucial question by P.J. O'Rourke, Pat Buchanan, Steven Mosher, and many more. Also: How guns can stop mass shootings. (J/A '98)
- ☐ **What's the Problem with Day Care?** A controversial look at day care, motherhood, and how to help parents. Also: Michael Barone on reforming Social Security. (M/J '98)
- ☐ **Boom Towns** Nashville illustrates why the Great American Heartland is booming. Also: Why the media don't understand America. (M/A '98)
- ☐ **Gen X** The good, bad, & ugly sides of today's youth. And: Clint Eastwood talks politics. P.J. O'Rourke. Welfare reform. (J/F '98)
- ☐ **Shrinking Government** It's not a lost cause, say Steve Forbes, James Buchanan, & many others. Also, Bennett vs. Bork on alcohol. (N/D '97)
- ☐ **Entrepreneurship** The driving force behind today's boom. T.J. Rodgers, Michael Novak, & others. Also: the ACLU vs the poor. (J/A '97)
- ☐ **The '60s Return** James Webb, P.J. O'Rourke, Robert Bork, Fred Barnes, David Horowitz, Bill Bennett, etc. on the decade that opened the liberal floodgates. (M/J '97)
- ☐ **Tradition: Who Needs It?** Exploring the value of time-tested ideas. James Webb, Stanley Crouch, Wynton Marsalis, Michael Medved, E.D. Hirsch, Miss Manners, Mark Steyn, Charles Murray. (M/A '97)
- ☐ **Privatizing Social Security** Meet the super-reform that would rev up the national economy, and dramatically shrink government. (J/F '97)
- ☐ **Cures for Lonely Suburbs and Dying Cities** A conservative look at the "sprawl" issue and what's wrong with cities. (N/D '96)
- ☐ **Who Are America's Religious Conservatives?** A surprising look, with James Dobson, Fred Barnes, Marvin Olasky, Glenn Loury. (N/D '95)

☐ Please start my one-year subscription to *The American Enterprise.* (AFAJA9)

☐ Please extend my current subscription by one year. (EFAJA9)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

City .....

State/Zip .....

☐ check for $28 (made out to *The American Enterprise*) enclosed.

☐ bill my VISA/MC/AMEX

card # .....

expires .....

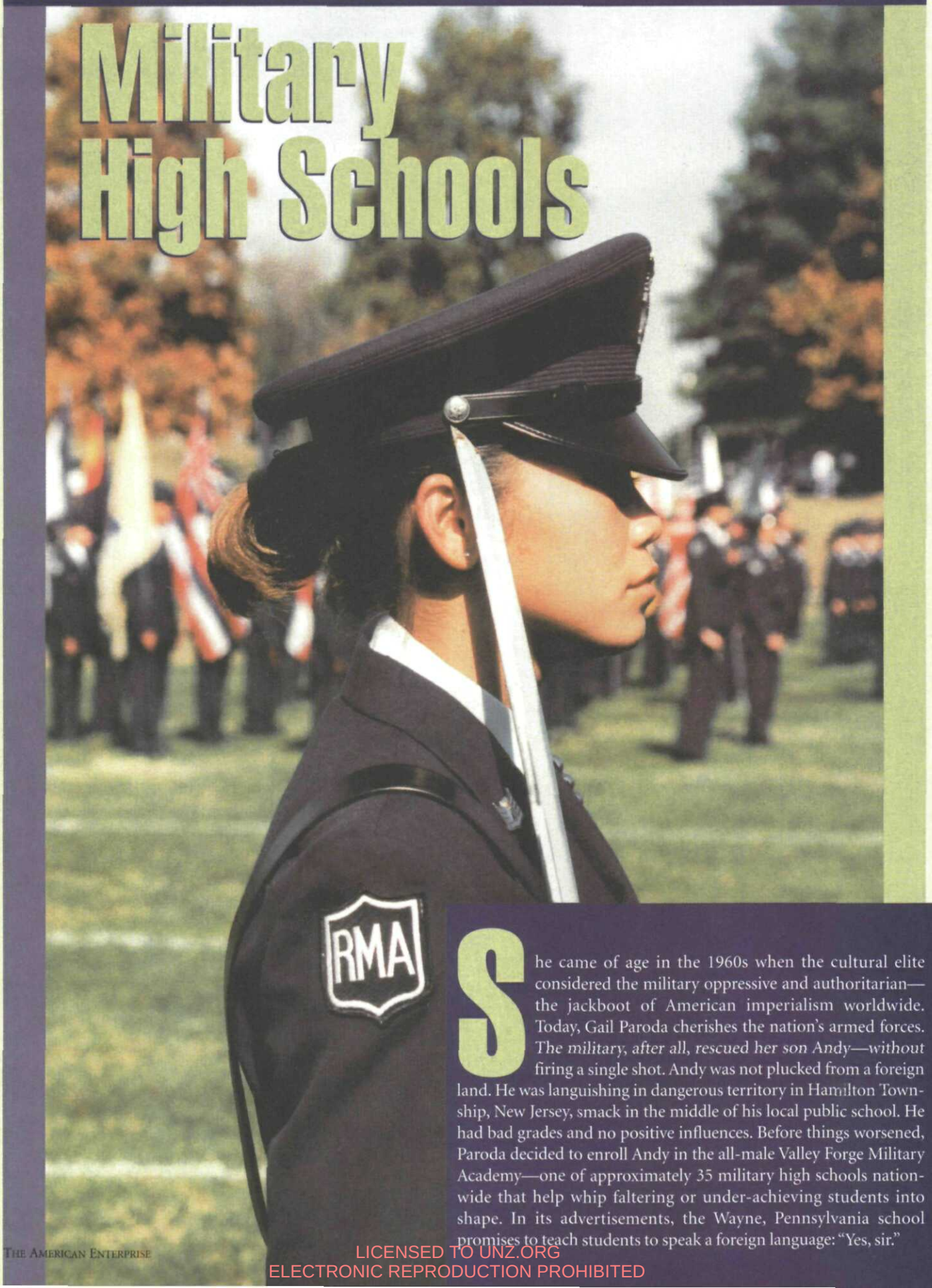
sig. .....

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE RESURGENCE OF

Military High Schools



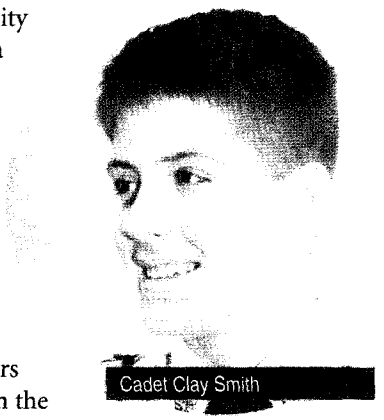
She came of age in the 1960s when the cultural elite considered the military oppressive and authoritarian—the jackboot of American imperialism worldwide. Today, Gail Paroda cherishes the nation's armed forces. *The military, after all, rescued her son Andy—without* firing a single shot. Andy was not plucked from a foreign land. He was languishing in dangerous territory in Hamilton Township, New Jersey, smack in the middle of his local public school. He had bad grades and no positive influences. Before things worsened, Paroda decided to enroll Andy in the all-male Valley Forge Military Academy—one of approximately 35 military high schools nationwide that help whip faltering or under-achieving students into shape. In its advertisements, the Wayne, Pennsylvania school promises to teach students to speak a foreign language: "Yes, sir."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Andy Paroda, Valley Forge was a foreign culture. Up at the crack of dawn, he was dressed in the same crisp uniform as everyone else, required to march to class and salute visitors. But Andy's grades improved dramatically from a *D* to a *B* average. Equally important, his mother has said, he acquired a sense of right and wrong.

With the economy booming and public schools often disappointing or even treacherous, a growing number of parents are turning to private military high schools to educate their sons and daughters. The schools, which seemed headed for extinction in the late 1960s and early '70s, have seen enrollments increase steadily in recent years. Many are jammed to capacity and sport long waiting lists, as anxious parents scramble for slots.

"Students are used to saying and doing whatever they please. What we preach here is civility and manners," says David Bouton, headmaster of the Benedictine High School, a military day school in Richmond, Virginia. "You have boys used to outlandish attire, and suddenly everyone is in the same uniform—no one stands out. Suddenly, conformity and uniform are the standards. This comes as a real culture shock, but those are the very same things that cause the bonding."


Cadet Clay Smith

The schools take great pains to emphasize that they are not reform schools. As Colonel Bob Miller, dean of the Fork Union Military Academy in Virginia says, sounding more like a diplomat than a soldier, "We don't take anyone with a relationship with the law." What military high schools do provide, however, is the discipline that many teenagers need. The schools provide both a refuge from the public schools and an antidote. Instead of peer pressure to have sex or take drugs, the peer pressure at military high schools is to behave. These are lessons the kids learn early. About half the military academies begin in middle school, some even earlier.

These schools are by no means just training grounds for the armed forces. While Gulf War General Norman Schwarzkopf is a Valley Forge graduate, the school also boasts alumni in many other fields, including former New Hampshire Senator Warren Rudman, nine-time Grammy Award-winner Jimmy Sturr, and an author who knows a thing or two about wayward teenagers—J. D. Salinger.

With most of the schools boasting that 95 percent of their graduates go on to two- or four-year colleges (often top ones), military high schools prepare most of their charges for the workplace, not the battlefield. The schools usually have junior ROTC programs—Randolph-Macon Academy students in Woodstock, Virginia, can even earn pilot licenses through the program. But under 5 percent of military high school graduates join the military. "Teaching leadership and teamwork is the real purpose of these schools," Bouton contends, "despite the misconception [that we] play with guns and do war games." A student at LaSalle Military Academy in Oakdale, New York, notes, "They're not teaching us how to kill. They're teaching us discipline and leadership."

Just as Catholic schools appeal to parents who are not Catholic or even religious, military high schools provide an answer to some parents who are not Army people. "They use a military system to teach kids what they should have learned in public schools," says William Trousdale, an historian who is writing a book on military high schools. "Parents are tired of worrying that [their kid] may be shot or stabbed or talked into stealing."

It was those kind of concerns that led a Philadelphia single mother to enroll her son in Fork Union Military Academy in 1989. Donna George's son, Eddie, would later win a Heisman Trophy, but at the time she enrolled him, his future seemed bleak. Distracted at his public school and habitually lying to her, Eddie was going nowhere fast. George had the solution: Fork Union, which her brother attended ten years earlier. She decided she had to send Eddie there, even though it meant taking out loans to pay his tuition. "Forget about playing football your junior year at public school," George told her son, "you're going to Fork Union, whether you like it or not." He didn't. Eddie cried and appealed to relatives—to no avail.

With its manicured lawns and grand playing fields, the academy looks, at first glance, like a conventional prep school. Come a little closer, however, and it's clear that the place is anything but. Goodbye, Mr. Chips. Hello, Reveille.

From the moment wake-up sounded until the end of the day, Eddie George was busy either marching or studying or taking classes. At first, his recalcitrance continued; as punishment he was forced to help clean a church in front of fellow cadets. But by the time his mother came to visit for parents' weekend, his attitude had changed. Eddie proudly served as part of the school honor guard. He developed a burning desire to excel and a work ethic that later brought him football stardom at Ohio State University, a Heisman Trophy, and an NFL contract. Fork Union is one of only two high schools in the nation to boast two Heisman winners (the other Vinny Testaverde).

Even with such impressive results, military schools occupy only a tiny niche in the education world. "It's not for everybody. It's for a small number of kids," says Virginia Military Institute superintendent Josiah Bunting. "But it does a pretty good job for kids who lack focus and need discipline." That raises an obvious question: Are these schools living in the past or riding the wave of the future?

Tuition is expensive at all such schools—$15,000 to $20,000 a year at the priciest institutions, as low as $6,500 for in-state residents at the New Mexico Military Institute. But if school vouchers become readily available, cost will be less of a deterrent.

More importantly, as secondary education drowns in foolish educational theories, military high schools operate on a winning formula: Hard work, loyalty, a sense of community and individual purpose, and personal discipline. Some sophisticates deride that philosophy as simplistic, but many parents hail it as a wise "back to basics" approach now sadly lacking from most public schools.

The practices of America's military high schools are not marketing experiments, however. They are deep-rooted traditions at institutions that often date back to nineteenth-century foundings. There were about 750 military academies early in this century, but many closed "after the first World War, when a

BY EVAN GAHR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wave of isolationist sentiment swept the United States," according to the historian William Trousdale. More closings followed World War II and Korea. By the late 1950s, about 600 remained.

In the late 1960s and early '70s the schools were hit by a "double whammy" of poor economic conditions and an anti-military atmosphere. Faced with dwindling enrollment, some of the remaining schools decided to admit women in the 1970s to swell their ranks. No such luck. For example, Randolph-Macon first took girls in 1974, yet by 1981 the school's enrollment was a mere 118 students.

But as the economy rebounded in the 1980s and Ronald Reagan helped shift attitudes toward the military, the schools slowly rebounded. Trousdale says most military academies have seen their enrollments rise between 5 and 10 percent over the last few years. (His estimate is consistent with figures provided by schools cited in this article.) For the current academic year, Randolph-Macon admitted 437 students, and rejected more applicants than ever before.

Randolph-Macon's Virginia campus looks plush, but don't let the green lawns fool you. Even the simplest privileges must be earned. Students get only 90 minutes of free time daily. The rest of the day is strictly regimented, from the 6:30 a.m. wake-up call to mandatory study hall in the afternoon to lights out at 10 p.m. This demanding schedule, par for the course at most such schools, is not for everyone. About 15 percent of Valley Forge students, for example, leave before their first year is over. Other schools report similar attrition rates, with students either dropping out or being dismissed. But many of those who stay clearly thrive, despite their initial skepticism.

Perhaps one of the schools' most effective tools is positive peer pressure. It is quite explicit. Students absorb the school's principles and are loathe to dissent from the majority culture. At military high schools, students quite literally police each other. Turn someone in and you're not known as a snitch but heralded as someone who "sticked." Upper-classmen may even find themselves taking orders from more accomplished younger students. Prestige cannot be bought; it must be achieved. At Randolph-Macon, for example, student rank is earned through military and academic performance—and displayed with bars on their uniforms. Students must obey and salute those who outrank them.

"The beauty of that," says Lewis Sorley, executive director of the Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States, "is that it gives cadets a responsibility. [They] learn to be responsible for somebody besides themselves, and they learn something about obligations."

These are not easy lessons. Clay Smith, a junior who came to Randolph-Macon from a public school, says taking orders from younger classmates, "gets kind of rough, but you have to do it." Smith has experienced several kinds of peer pressure. At his public school he had a big problem with procrastination and could never say no when friends urged him to hang out instead

A Talk with Military Educator Josiah Bunting, III

General Josiah Bunting is a man who has both studied and experienced military education at all levels. A Vietnam infantry veteran with two Oxford degrees, he is currently superintendent of his alma mater, the Virginia Military Institute, having previously headed the Lawrenceville School, Hampden-Sydney College (an all-male school), and Briarcliff (an all-women's college). In a recent conversation with TAE *associate editor John Meroney, Bunting mulled the status of military schooling today.*

TAE: The shooting in Littleton, Colorado, has everyone asking whether one can spot troubled children early on?
Bunting: I don't believe one can spot it. And I'm afraid it's going to happen with tragic regularity from here on. We're a country of 270 million people with tens of thousands of schools, and every year you're going to have four or five or ten of these episodes, period. But it isn't as likely in small schools where there's an intimate relationship between teachers and children. In the big suburban high schools, teenagers can get pretty far down the line without anybody spotting it.
TAE: The hero of your latest novel, *An Education for Our Time,* is a critic of SATs and other standardized tests. Are you?
Bunting: The people I admire are the ones who have a humane, civic wisdom that isn't reliably correlated with academic intelligence. It's that strange little area that subsists on the border of intellect and character. The mission of VMI is the preparation of virtuous, disinterested leaders, and what we're looking for is young people who have the capacity to one day grow wise. I don't see how that is correlated with being Phi Beta Kappa at a famous university filled only with people who have achieved a 1520 on their SATs. We had a boy who was graduated two years ago from here, and he was our first captain, near the top academically, a brilliant kid. I looked at his SATs one day and they were about 1040. The next eight people underneath him had 1490 or 1530.
TAE: Is there a type of student for whom a military education is best?
Bunting: Yes. One is the hard-working, dutiful, academically good but not superb kid who somehow feels drawn to the military as a career for a variety of reasons. But there's a second type that's more common. It's a collection of kids who have sort of dawdled around and been lazy. For a whim, or an impulse of delight, they just wash up on this shore. Many do extremely well. They somehow find here an environment that puts them together, and focuses them. Out of that group, some very good military officers emerge.
TAE: Do you find the same caliber student at VMI as you did when you were president at Hampden-Sydney College?
Bunting: In at least one way: The majority are hard-working kids who haven't done brilliantly in academia. There's also a very large conservative, blue-collar, Catholic, urban constituency here. There are kids from Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Washington. They come from the Archbishop Malloy, Cardinal O'Reilly high schools. Hampden-Sydney had very little of that. Today VMI is much more of a middle-class, even lower-middle-class school than it was 50 years ago. Also interesting: 135 of the 1,300 cadets here last year were eagle scouts.
TAE: In a highly publicized speech before the National Press Club last year, you said that the admission of women to VMI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of work. Now that temptation is gone—as are other distractions.

At public school Smith also felt squeezed between the preppies with their fancy clothes and a group of long-haired malcontents. In a telephone interview, Smith said he spent too much time every morning deciding what to wear and whether he'd feel "stupid." No longer.

Religion is another thread common to these schools. Most military academies are affiliated with a religious denomination, and chapel service is generally mandatory. Randolph-Macon has been associated with the United Methodist Church since the school's founding in 1892. Every Sunday night, students gather in the chapel. The idea, explains school president Major General Henry Hobgood, is that "the first activity" of the week is a religious service, helping to put other priorities straight.

David Bouton, the headmaster at Benedictine High School, says the religious backdrop makes sense, given the many parallels between military virtues and the Judeo-Christian tradition: "The good of the group before individuals. The value of teamwork. Personal integrity."

Obviously, chapel services, rules, and drill can't make everything perfect. At the Marine Military Academy, founded by an Arizona rancher and former Marine who wanted his son to receive an education in accord with Marine principles, a cadet was knifed while he slept last year. Parents filed lawsuits against the Texas school, charging that it had long tolerated physical abuse of cadets. The school has denied the charges, but many parents withdrew their kids in the face of the adverse publicity.

There are signs, however, that the military ethos can accomplish things not easily achieved otherwise. The best proof: Military curricula are even taking hold in some public schools. In Detroit, the Charles Rogers Academy, named for a black army general, offers much the same program as a military prep school. Students of each year have different ranks; discipline is tight; standards are high. About half the seniors attend college—an extremely impressive rate for an inner-city school. Rogers is a junior ROTC academy—one of approximately 40 nationwide—sponsored by the Defense and Education Departments. Based on this example, a school board member in Milwaukee wants to convert one of that city's public schools into a military academy.

Meanwhile, businessman and U.S. Naval Academy graduate Forrest Wheat has recently purchased land near the Virginia coast. On it, he plans to construct the first new private military academy to open since 1965. With their successful track records, and their use of character-building tools long since discarded at other institutions, military high schools are likely to find their niche expanding considerably in coming years. They may even encourage other educators and parents still mired in liberal educational shibboleths to realize that marching to a different tune can be beneficial for many young Americans.

Evan Gahr is a TAE *contributing writer.*

was the "saddest story I have ever heard." Explain that.

Bunting: "This is the saddest story I have ever heard" is the first line of Ford Madox Ford's novel, *The Good Soldier.* What I meant was that an institution like this one knows best in its own heart what it is. It should be the originator and author of the changes it makes. It shouldn't be done by an outside agency which doesn't understand its purpose and doesn't really know the place. We're like so many of the great little colleges—Oberlin, Haverford, and Davidson. These are Burke's "little platoons." And they depend so much for their chemistry on thousands of little day-to-day encounters. To alter that as radically as the imposition of co-education does is a sad thing. Sadness in the sense of bereavement. A much-loved and time-proved institution has been suddenly changed. Once that's been executed, it's irretrievable. The day-to-day changes aren't particularly profound or noticeable now, but there's no question it's a great loss.

TAE: What kind of young women are attracted to a military education?

Bunting: They all want a large, unusual challenge, and they want to prove themselves to themselves. In addition, an unusually high number of them are athletes, and an unusually high number of those are runners. There's obviously a convergence between long distance running and this feisty independence that seems to drive young women to apply to a place like this. Also, of the 250 or 300 women who have applied since I've been here, they are much more heavily out-of-state candidates than are the men. VMI, until recently, has been largely a Virginia institution, but the female applications have been from all over the country, especially the West Coast.

TAE: Are we seeing these women now because their parents were raised in the '60s?

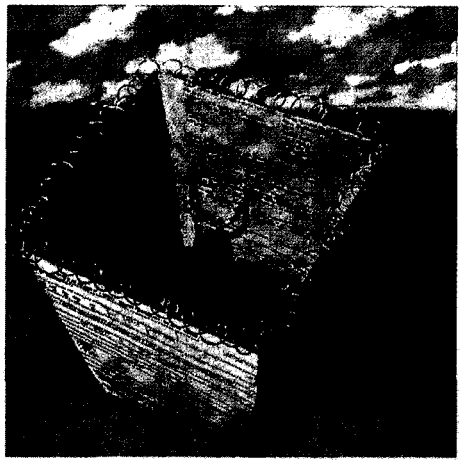
Bunting: It may indeed be a reaction to their parents' generation. But kids who are coming here now were born near the end of Reagan's first term; so a lot of their parents are beyond the counterculture. Parents of kids who are entering college now were typically themselves in college in the mid-'70s, not the mid-'60s. What we have here is a cohort of Generation X-refugees. Most of them are people who say, "I see what the culture is in my town, high school, and big state university, and I don't really want that. I want to submit myself to discipline, and mold my character in a way that will make me more effective and perhaps even a better person."

TAE: It's said that if you want the old West Point or Naval Academy experience today, don't go to either place: Try VMI or The Citadel.

Bunting: That's exactly right. The Citadel is actually quite different from us. I don't mean better or worse—but their culture is different from ours. We haven't made any changes. We still have the same physical aptitude test: Women have to do the same number of pull-ups as the men, and we just haven't given ground on that. For instance, there's a girl here who on September 1, 1998, didn't do any pull-ups on her test. When she had the same test in April, she did 14. If you patronize young women and say, "We're going to have a different standard because your upper-body resources aren't what men's are," then the women will meet your low expectations. But if you say, "We're not going to change at all; we're going to make you change," they'll try to reach your high expectation. I see no reason to alter that.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Escaping the Medicare Crisis



THE GRAND DISGUISE: WHY MEDICAL EXPENSES ARE OUT OF CONTROL

By Dr. William C. Waters III

Once upon a time, the Kingdom of Xanadu got into a terrible war, and to attract workers, industry decided to provide bread to employees. Companies bought "bread insurance" to provide 80 percent of whatever bread was consumed, and many times the grocery store would accept the insurance payment alone and not insist on collecting the remaining 20 percent from the customer. The King and Parliament gave the companies permission to deduct the costs of this benefit from their taxable income.

The King and Parliament were watching and soon decided to give the over-65 population the same goodie the working people had. After all, bread was the staff of life, wasn't it? Anybody over 65 could have all the bread they "needed." They would pay only 20 percent and the "government" (meaning taxpayers) would supply the other 80 percent.

Bread soon became the staple of the whole population. Consumers and providers found no limits on the consumption, production, or cost of bread. As wheat growers, brokers, bakers, and retail outlets understood the opportunity, the price of bread started climbing. Soon 80 percent of the new price was many times the old price. Bakers made fancier bread. They enriched it with all kinds of vitamins and minerals. Families stormed the supermarkets for bread and the lines kept getting longer—after all, it was "free," right?

The price of bread in Xanadu zoomed. Now, half a century later, no one in the land can possibly afford bread unless he or she is "covered" by either an employer plan or government "BreadiCare. " Candidates for office and journalists loudly complain that 17 percent of the population has no bread insurance and can't afford bread. Meanwhile, loaves of enriched sourdough, currant, and rye are displayed in bakers' windows—glistening with golden patinas, and bearing frightful price tags.

Next, industry begins cutting deals with food brokers, insisting on simpler fare and lower prices. The King's government, fearful that BreadiCare will be bankrupt by 2005, schedules cuts in bread deliveries, refuses to reimburse bakeries and stores for their full charges, and slightly increases payments by individual citizens. The public and the press complain loudly about having to pay more out of pocket, worry about the quality of bread, and insist that having free bread is their right. Some members of the RightWing party say drastic cuts will be necessary to save the system, while Left-Wingers criticize them for being mean-spirited and "taking your BreadiCare benefits away." Polls indicate the people want to hear any story which is reassuring.

Told that access to bread is worse and the quality of bread is going down, the government adopts elaborate rules to "control" bread-making practices. Parliament imposes harsh fines and penalties on bakers wherever bureaucrats think they have departed from the regulations in a 400-page coding manual put together jointly by the Xanadu Bakers' Association and the Bread Financing Council. The King appoints a blue-ribbon panel to study the crisis and create a document on people's bread rights. By now, because of the way the government has financed food production, the citizens of the land of Xanadu are learning to make stone soup.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Whether we recognize it or not, *all* goods and services are rationed—usually by availability and cost. You and I do not eat caviar and lobster every day, because they're expensive. We don't live in Bill Gates' house—it's horrendously extravagant. We don't wear Ralph Lauren garments to dig in the garden—they're too pricey. Yet we don't complain that these basics—food, shelter, clothing—are unfairly rationed.

Medical care, necessary as it is, is not as critical as other commodities like food or shelter. Everyone knows people who have survived well without medical attention for half a century; no one survives without food for half a month. One wonders why, then, medical care has been moved so sharply up the ladder of public priorities, leapfrogging more basic concerns. It's time to remove the mask and acknowledge that everything is rationed. Rationing is essential. Rationing is rational. The question is, Who does it?

Prior to World War II, every family paid its own health bill. The doctor and the patient, facing a decision, both motivated to be prudent, sat down and decided what was needed, what was reasonable, and what was affordable. My father, practicing medicine from 1926-66, was limited in what was available but was dedicated to quality and had every incentive to be careful with his patient's funds. So did the hospital administrator. So did the drug maker.

In the last 30 years, things have been different. The doctor has been rewarded for over-use—hospitalizing patients, scheduling surgery, bringing the patient back more often, ordering more tests in his office. The patient didn't mind. As a matter of fact, patients were anxious to wring as much as possible out of their available benefits, paid (it seemed) by another. The more a hospital or drug manufacturer charged, the more they got—from the insurance company or the government. Before the payers caught on, patients often requested hospitalization "so the insurance will cover it." During my own years of medical practice (1962 to the present) I have been encouraged by the system not to worry, or even think about cost. Had I been an efficient entrepreneur I suppose I would actually have wanted to pump up expenditures.

My son, who started practice in 1989, faces a different prospect. During his career the rationing will be done by the wrong people—not by him as doctor or by his patients but by office-bound clerks and administrators almost completely ignorant of the discipline they are regulating.

My father and his patients were prudent; my patients and I were spendthrift; my son and his patients will be told what to do by people without training or knowledge of the individual consumer's situation.

The main problem we face today in getting our medical expenditures under control is that our people have become convinced that the health care dollar materializes out of nowhere, and that they should never have to pay for their own treatments. Americans are now addicts to medical paternalism. I spoke to a Medicare-age audience recently and pointed out, "All of you in this room want all the people in the next room to pay your health bill. But all the people over there want you to pay theirs." In reality, if your employer "provides" health insurance, you are still paying for your own coverage, and also for the health bills of the uninsured, whether you know it or not. The same is true of Medicare: You're paying for it. And if you're too young to use it, you're paying even more.

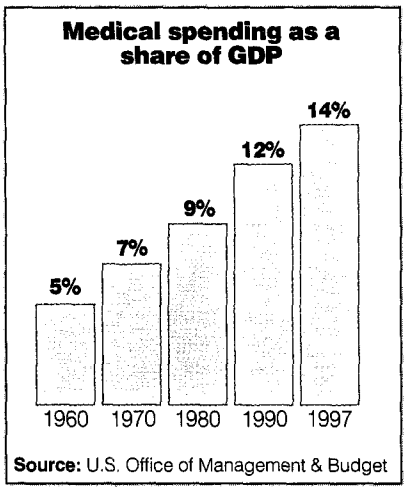
Correcting this fundamental flaw will require one thing: Gradually returning the husbandry of the health care dollar to the citizen. Several straightforward steps would help move us in that direction.

MEDICAL SPENDING EXPLODES

Every single year for more than three decades, American spending on medical care has risen faster than inflation. In many recent years, in fact, medical spending has increased more than *twice* as fast as inflation.

The result is that health care is eating up a bigger and bigger portion of our national wealth, as the chart to right indicates.

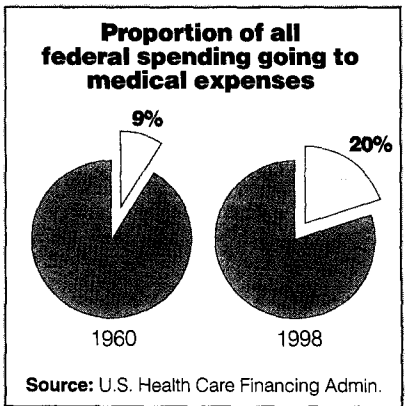
The other important trend taking place while total medical spending was roaring upwards was the increasing fraction of bills being picked up by the government. Just over the latest six years for which we have data (1990-96) the proportion of national medical expenses paid by government zipped from 41 percent to 47 percent. Private payments shrank from 59 percent to 53 percent of the total. Any day now we will reach a milestone: More of the U.S. health tab will be paid by government than by private individuals and companies.



This is being felt in government budgets at all levels. Back in 1978, for instance, only 9 cents of every dollar of federal spending went for health and medical care. By 1998, that had increased to 20 cents.

And every projection of how spending will grow over the next generation shows that unless there is serious reform, government spending on health care is going to mushroom to unmanageable levels. Federal Medicare and Medicaid expenditures, for example, are projected by the Congressional Budget Office to nearly triple as a proportion of GDP over the next 40 years. Already, federal spending on Medicare and Medicaid totals more than $320 billion a year—much more than total defense spending, much more than all other discretionary programs put together, in fact.

—KZ



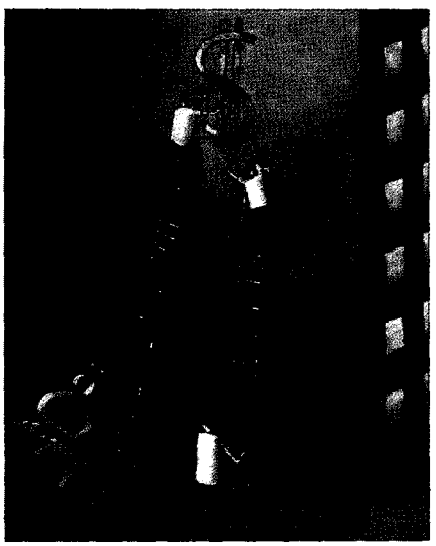
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

First, we ought to allow employees, like employers, a tax credit on their health insurance premiums. Then they become decision-makers instead of passive recipients. Today, a typical head of household with a wife and one child is presently being paid $36,000 while actually earning $39,600—the $3,600 difference is sequestered away by the company to pay for his medical plan. Under current law, if the worker were given the money to purchase his own health insurance, he would, first have to pay substantial income taxes on the $3,600. But were he granted the same "break" as his employer and allowed to deduct the full cost of health insurance from his taxable income, he could take control of his own medical expenditures.

He could purchase, for about $800-1,200 per year, insurance that would cover any major medical catastrophes costing more than $2,000-$3,000. With his remaining $2,600 he would have the choice of either buying other day-to-day health coverage through a group arrangement, or paying his family's small medical expenses as they appear. All monies spent on health care—including incidental expenses up to the $3,600 ceiling—would be deductible. It is not difficult to imagine the prudence that he and his wife would show in doling out their dollars for medical care under such a scenario. Now that the costs are real, they would carefully consider the need for that MRI or extra office visit.

Citizens should eventually be obligated to own at least a high-deductible emergency medical policy with a certified company, in order to protect the rest of the public from the medical shoplifting that results when an uninsured individual shows up sick or injured and in need of care that cannot (and should not) be denied. Currently, such free-riders create big medical costs that must be picked up by other individuals who are careful and conscientious enough to buy coverage. Persons with low incomes could be provided by the government with vouchers to buy the required private insurance coverage. Unlike Medicaid payments or emergency room care for indigents who just show up sick, such vouchers would be budgeted by the government in advance and capped at definite levels.

MY FATHER AND HIS PATIENTS WERE PRUDENT; MY PATIENTS AND I WERE SPENDTHRIFT; MY SON AND HIS PATIENTS WILL BE TOLD WHAT TO DO BY BEAN COUNTERS.



Over a period of years, we ought to aim to shift all medical insurance coverage away from employers (where it has grown up simply because of the tax advantages) and government (where it likewise seems free to the recipient), gradually transferring it instead to individuals. Tax credits, deductions, medical savings accounts, and vouchers could be used to leave workers no worse off in the process. Then consumers would be in control of their own expenditures—and in a stronger position to make their own choices, as well as to place a strong dampening effect on medical price inflation.

Many smaller reforms could simultaneously advance this goal of encouraging consumers to buy medical care with something more like the care with which they buy groceries. For instance, patient co-payments ought to be gradually raised so that the patient has a truer financial stake in each medical transaction. Managers of plans where individuals pay as much as 50 percent of their own health premiums say that this definitely makes people more prudent about their use of the system. The RAND health insurance experiment showed that people with increased cost-sharing had decreased the use of services without any difference in health outcomes.

Radical changes in our concepts of health care protection are long overdue. For example, it doesn't really make sense to view ordinary health care expenses as something to be covered by insurance in the first place. The usual "bets" we make with insurance companies—whether we will die, or whether our house will burn down—are rational because neither the insured nor the insurer want the event to happen. The same is true with major medical coverage: No one would want to cash in on a policy which applies only during serious hospitalization. But almost everyone wants to "use" day-to-day medical coverage for office visits to address things like nagging colds, ugly moles, and sore joints. For these kinds of expenses totalling under, say, $2,000 a year, what our current medical system provides isn't really insurance at all but rather pre-paid care. No wonder it's so dear.

If nothing substantive is done, we shall continue repairing and patching our current health care system fruitlessly. We will encourage managed care, then make laws which prevent it from working. We will foster, then grumble bitterly about, the bureaucracy and impersonality of HMOs. We will pine for the old days. There is a grave risk we will move toward a single-payer program and watch the BreadiCare disaster unfold on a massive scale.

Without some radical market-based, individual-directed reforms, we will magnify government surveillance (carried out by non-medical people)—at great cost and great distress to both the healthcare profession and the people it serves. We will also extend the ugly trendline of medical inflation, so that, at present rates, it will grow over the next

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

half-century to insupportable and then inconceivable levels. Access to care will get worse, not better. We will go from trouble to disaster.

If we proceed, however, with a plan for returning the management of the health care dollar to the individual, reason will have been introduced; personal cost will help govern decisions; providers will compete to slice, rather than pad, prices. Medicine will perhaps not be as remunerative to the providers as it has been over the last half-century, but it will have regained a semblance of reality.

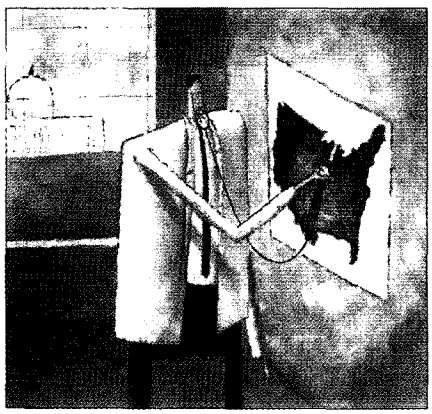
An additional benefit will also surface: It will become unnecessary to employ so many agents at the Offices of the Inspector General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Health Care Financing Administration. Instead of bureaucrats and policemen there will now be 100 million unpaid individual patrolmen guarding the medical expenditure process, husbanding their own funds, making their own decisions, controlling costs. Various claims about the extent of medical payment fraud—$10 billion? $50 billion?—will become moot. The vast investigative process deployed to rout it out will no longer be a burden on the public—or even needed.

If we sit down once again at a clean drawing board, and this time use common sense, rather than pretending we can repeal the laws of human nature, we can create a sound new arrangement for buying medical care. Our health bills will at last increase only slowly, slower than general inflation, actually shrinking rather than swelling relative to the size of our national economy. When the powerful consumer knows the tab, spends his or her own money, and controls the cost, Americans will be able to get good medical care, just as they buy everything else, for a decent price.

And they, and their doctors, will make the vital decisions.

William C. Waters III practices medicine in Atlanta. He has served as clinical professor at Emory University, chairman of the Piedmont Hospital, chairman of the Promina health care system, and governor for Georgia of the American College of Physicians. His book on this topic is The Grand Disguise.

MEDICARE HAS BECOME A TOP-DOWN, GOVERNMENT-RUN HEALTH SYSTEM THAT ENCOURAGES UNCHECKED SPENDING WHILE IMPOSING INTRUSIVE CONTROLS. AND IT FACES BANKRUPTCY WITHIN A FEW YEARS.



ONE QUICK, PRACTICAL OPTION FOR IMPROVING MEDICARE COSTS AND QUALITY

By Congressman Bill Thomas

Medicare is rapidly going bankrupt. The proposal the President made in his State of the Union address to assign almost $700 billion of projected future budget surpluses to bail out one portion of Medicare demonstrates the extent of the problem, but does not solve it. That scheme would extend the life of the particular trust fund that pays for hospital care, but only for a few years, and it would do nothing to address Medicare's underlying problems.

Medicare expenditures are increasing at an unsustainable rate, and we must not rely on possible future surpluses alone to bail the program out. The "surpluses" may not be there in fact, and relying on them puts Medicare on shaky financial ground. Even if they do materialize, using the surpluses for Medicare would feed, not reduce, its demand on tax revenues. Putting more gas in an old car does not make it run more smoothly and is no substitute for an overhaul. Medicare requires an overhaul to survive and meet the health care needs of Americans who will retire over the next generation.

When it began in 1966, Medicare gave beneficiaries an open-ended entitlement to government payment for practically every service doctors and hospitals provided. It quickly became apparent, however, that this entitlement offered a blank check for unlimited draws on federal tax funds. In response, the government over the past 25 years has introduced a series of increasingly stringent controls.

These controls do not change the underlying bad incentives of Medicare. They attempt instead to counteract the effects of those incentives. As a result, the government now sets the price of every physician's service, of every hospital stay, and of almost every other treatment received by Medicare beneficiaries, like oxygen, X-rays, CAT scans, and blood tests. Additional complex regulations are continually imposed to enforce those controls.

Rather than being an aid to senior citizens who participate in the private health care system, Medicare has become a top-down, government-run health system itself. As a result, there are now more than 130,000 pages of laws, rules, manuals, instructions, alert notices, and so forth governing the delivery and payment of health care in this country (according to a count by the Mayo Clinic).

It is no wonder that senior citizens and the health care professionals who care for them bristle at these restrictions. Their hands are tied by red tape. Innovation is discouraged. Patients and taxpayers alike are denied the savings and wider choices that would result from fair competition among health plans.

Medicare now combines the worst of three worlds: It is based on incentives that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

encourage unchecked spending, it operates through intrusive controls in an effort to counteract those incentives, but it nevertheless faces bankruptcy within a decade.

Senator John Breaux (D-La.) and I have proposed a new approach. It would give senior citizens the financial and institutional assistance necessary to buy private health insurance of their own choice. Various plans will compete to attract members by offering quality care at efficient prices. If seniors do not want to choose a private plan they could stay in the government-run system. The resulting competition will protect patients better than a government bureaucracy alone can.

Our "premium support system" (which might better be called "MediChoice") offers our best chance of avoiding punitive health care costs while adding new benefits for Medicare's patients. A premium support system was the reform preferred by a majority of last year's National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, which I cochaired. Our proposal, which President Clinton has failed to act on, would have the government pay a stated amount toward the purchase of whatever medical insurance a senior citizen chooses. The government payment will be based on the actual costs of all the participating plans. This automatically adjusts for new medical technology and new treatments and reflects beneficiaries' choice of what kind of services they want.

Private plans chosen by beneficiaries would have to meet Medicare standards. An independent board would monitor their operations, as well as those of the government-operated system that would remain for those who don't opt out. In this way, a premium support system combines government protections with market-based competition and innovation.

Our premium support system is modeled after the plan under which members of Congress and 9 million other Federal Government employees, retirees, and their dependents obtain their health insurance. It is also like the plan under which employees of state and local governments in California obtain their insurance.

The forces of the status quo, however, are struggling to keep the current system in place—with more regulations, *ad hoc* bailouts from tax revenues, and ultimately higher taxes. I believe we must overcome their resistance and make the Medicare system much more efficient and responsive to beneficiaries' needs. We must try an approach that, while new to Medicare, is well proven among millions of other Americans. Then elderly Americans and the taxpayers who pay for their health care will at last enjoy medical care that is excellent, flexible, and affordable.

Representative Bill Thomas (R-Calif.) is chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health.

A Longer-Term Alternative: Save Medicare with Savings

By John Hood

Memo to Washington policy wonks: Forget Social Security and across-the-board tax cuts for the moment. They are a distraction. It's Medicare (and its less-familiar cousin Medicaid) that the Congress and President ought to be worrying about right now.

That's not the conventional wisdom, of course. Committee hearings, talk shows, news columns, and think tanks have been buzzing more about privatizing Social Security and reforming the income tax. But no action is likely soon on either of those fronts. At this moment, the real crisis in the federal budget is in health care—where there is an irreconcilable gap between the benefits promised elderly Americans and the tax burden it would be reasonable to place on their children and grandchildren.

Medicare is terminally ill. As recently as 1997, its trustees calculated that the mandatory part of Medicare (Part A) would deplete its trust fund by the year 2001. Congressional fiddling and our recent stellar economic growth have now postponed the day of reckoning to more like 2008 or so. But don't count on much more of a reprieve.

Now is the time for everyone concerned about burdensome taxes and the continued growth of the welfare state to focus like a laser on federal health entitlements. If these can be reformed, Americans can be spared massive future tax hikes and weaned off of government dependency. If not, then the 60-year war waged by advocates of limited government against the New Deal and the Great Society will be irretrievably lost.

Why do I argue in such apocalyptic tones? Because the stakes are huge. As dishonest a swindle as Social Security is, Medicare is far worse. Economists use the term "unfunded liability" to describe the situation where a program has promised more in benefits than it collects in revenues. Over the next lifetime, the Medicare program's unfunded liability is more than the combination of all of Social Security's unfunded liability *plus* today's entire federal debt. (This from an indispensable report by Texas A&M economists Thomas R. Saving and Andrew J. Rettermaier, published earlier this year by the National Center for Policy Analysis.)

The staggering future costs of the Medicare entitlement is one reason not to take seriously the current talk about our budget surplus, and which taxes to cut or new programs to fund with it. The surplus is an accounting fiction. If we don't make significant changes in medical entitlements now, the surplus will disappear and the federal tax burden will surely rise during the next ten years. In the decades after that, the size of government and the level of taxes will soar.

Medicare is a complicated program, as are most of its suggested short-term reforms, such as subsidized premiums and more HMOs. But the problems with Medicare and other entitlements can be boiled down to a single fact: Politicians love to promise something for nothing. Today, the taxes collected for Medicare aren't channeled into productivity-enhancing investments that will generate income in the future when the payer is older and sicker. Instead, today's dollars simply fund today's consumption.

When Congress and the Johnson administration set up Medicare back in 1965, they didn't create a system of up-front savings and investment to create the real wealth necessary to provide all elderly Americans with a medical safety net during their later years. They simply devised a new way of redistributing income from workers to retirees. As long as the ratio between workers and retirees remained unchanged, Medicare's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

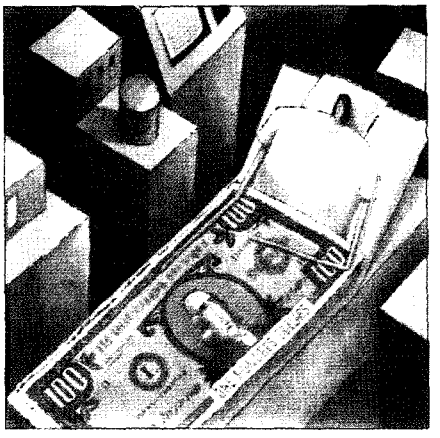
creators figured their Ponzi scheme could be maintained indefinitely. But the elderly failed to do their duty and die early, while researchers kept coming up with new treatments. So costs soared.

Now we have a situation in which existing workers must pay more and more into the system, while Medicare's finances are going to collapse just as those workers reach eligibility to begin collecting themselves. It'll be bad for many baby boomers, but today's young workers will take an even worse hit. This same problem afflicts Social Security, but it will take longer to materialize.

Is there any way out of this trap? Yes, though it won't be an easy escape. Medicare should be transformed over time from an income redistribution/entitlement scheme into a system of personal saving. Workers must be allowed to set aside a portion of their current Medicare taxes in private accounts that can build value through compounding and investment in real, productivity-boosting assets. At retirement, workers would use part of their accumulated funds to buy a health insurance plan to cover large medical bills, and use the balance of their fund to cover routine, small-dollar medical expenses.

There are many ways such a Medicare savings system could be structured. Both Saving and Rettenmaier at NCPA and Peter Ferrara of Americans for Tax Reform have sketched the outlines of such a plan. Some portion of the money currently deducted from the payroll checks of workers for Medicare taxes would be redirected to their personal medical savings accounts. Saving and Rettenmaier estimate that the average 25-year-old would need to deposit about $668 each year, or about 2.4 percent of the average person's wages, until the age of 65 to buy health benefits equivalent to today's Medicare package. That would leave more than half of the worker's Medicare contribution available to help pay benefits to older Americans already or soon to be on the current program. Workers in their forties or early fifties would have to redirect all of their current Medicare taxes, or even a little more, into personal accounts in order to build up the required nest-egg before retirement. Folks older than 53 or so wouldn't have time to make the transition, and so would be kept in the current Medicare set up.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR EVERYONE CONCERNED ABOUT BURDENSOME TAXES AND THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE WELFARE STATE TO FOCUS LIKE A LASER ON FEDERAL HEALTH ENTITLEMENTS.



To establish pre-paid retirement health insurance accounts while also keeping the current pay-as-you-go system intact during the transition, additional funds would have to be found. This would require either raising taxes, cutting unnecessary spending, or issuing debt. I'd favor a combination of the latter two. But—and this is important—the transition cost of moving to a savings system isn't a new federal liability. It's just a way of making the current unfunded liability more visible.

Saving and Rettermaier estimate that the entire transition cost will be no more than 25 percent of the cost of financing traditional Medicare over the next 75 years. That is a huge long-term tax cut, worth whatever short-term budgetary constraints it places on would-be big spenders or across-the-board tax cutters in Washington. In addition, accumulating wealth for retiree health care by having workers make real investments in the private sector will stoke our private economy and thus make a bigger pie available for all kinds of future needs.

There remain some perplexing problems. Should the federal government allow individuals wide freedom to invest and spend their health insurance savings as they want? Though this sounds appealing from the standpoint of liberty, it might also lead to a new entitlement later on as a few workers squander their investments and slip back onto the public dole. But even with strict rules and careful oversight, the general concept of swapping medical insurance savings for Medicare taxes would result in a substantial reduction in the amount of power the federal government exercises in the lives of average Americans.

Americans could be allowed to make additional tax-free contributions to their accounts on top of the required payroll taxes. Individuals might be permitted to use unspent medical insurance savings for nursing home care (the ticking time bomb within the Medicaid program), other retirement expenses, or bequests. Indeed, transforming Medicare into a system of personal savings accounts could be just the first step in truly reforming our whole entitlement system, to be followed soon after by Social Security and other programs. Rather than being tyrannized by arbitrary taxing and spending, Americans could be led to save tax free for the costliest events of life.

There's a reason why most Americans don't really want the federal budget to shrink: They can't envision a way to handle major life demands without Washington's assistance. But as the impending Medicare debacle illustrates, they actually won't be able to handle these events *with* Washington's assistance, at least not at the level of assistance currently promised. Americans are counting on what politicians constantly promise but never deliver: Something for nothing. A more honest alternative is desperately needed.

John Hood, president of the John Locke Foundation, is writing a book on prospects for shrinking the welfare state through personal investing.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Real Life

FIRST-PERSON AMERICA

CLEANING UP THE PUBLIC SQUARE

By Jennifer Roback Morse

SUNNYVALE, CALIFORNIA—We hear a lot about the moral decline of American public life. Can one person do anything about it? Here's an example that opened my eyes.

One March day in California, I took my two children to a coin-operated laundromat. When we arrived, the TV was blaring with a talk show. The guests were owners of a specialty night club. These men had chosen obese cross-dressers as their particular market niche. The talk show host was interviewing two very fat, glamorously dressed men. These guys were so catty they gave women a bad name.

Mind you, this TV program was loud, obnoxious, and unavoidable in the little laundromat. My eight-year-old son and five-year-old daughter were inexorably drawn to it. The TV was up on a platform too high for me to reach the controls. When the inevitable questions came of what it was all about, I replied as best I could. "The people are making fun of them because they are fat, and they are making money letting the people make fun of them." I could not bring myself to tell them that the elaborately dressed "ladies" were really men. As soon as we got the clothes in the washers, I said, "Let's go outside. This program isn't for kids."

After a few minutes in the brisk air in the parking lot, I noticed a kind-looking Asian gentleman coming towards us: "My name is Frank. This is my laundry. I am sorry you had to see that program. I changed the channel to a kids' program. Please, please come back inside." He showed me where he hid the broom handle that he uses to change the controls on the TV. He opened the snack machine and gave the kids each a bag of chips. We commiserated about the sad state of TV programming.

He did not need an elaborate philosophical or legal argument to explain why that particular program was undesirable for small children to see. He made a judgment about the type of environment he wanted to provide in his laundry. Needless to say, Frank gained a loyal customer that day.

I AM SURE SOME OF YOU MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THE MUSIC OR IMAGES BROADCAST INTO PUBLIC SPACES. WHEN YOU MAKE THOSE DECISIONS, I HOPE YOU WILL REMEMBER ME AND MY LITTLE ONES.

I couldn't help noticing that we were the only ones who walked out of the laundromat that day. In public places, people are mostly at the mercy of whoever makes the decision about what kind of music, radio, or TV programming will be broadcast into that space. I also couldn't help thinking that people of modest means spend far more time in public places than people of higher incomes. (Tell the truth, dear reader: When was the last time you were in a coin-operated laundromat?) People of modest incomes and educations, and sometimes limited English-language skills, are the least able to defend themselves against electronic assaults perpetrated by their "betters."

You might wonder what difference it makes what one little laundromat owner does. It matters because a laundromat is what he has. He took responsibility for his little corner of the world.

Since that day in Frank's laundry, I've paid more attention to broadcasts in public places. In grocery stores, discount stores, and shopping malls, I have occasionally noticed music with "mature" lyrics. I have waited for prescriptions in pharmacies in which the TV was permanently tuned to a soap opera.

The parental obligation to monitor what children see and hear would require parents to keep the children home from all these business places. This would not only be a burdensome inconvenience, it would be a great loss for the kids. Taking in the sights, sounds, smells, and textures is a significant learning experience for children.

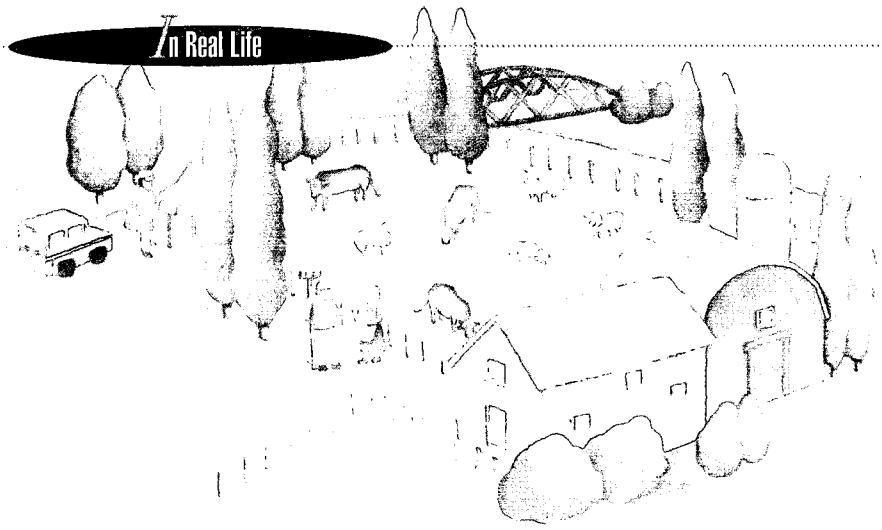
I am sure some readers have responsibility for the environment in various public places. Some of you make decisions about the music or images broadcast into spaces frequented by members of the general public. When you make those decisions, I hope you will remember me and my little ones, and our friend Frank.

Jennifer Roback Morse is a part-time research fellow at the Hoover Institution and author of Reinventing Libertarianism: The Family in a Free Society.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RURAL COUSINS

By Dale Anema



THE WESTERN STATES—The stereotype of farmers and ranchers as self-reliant businessmen is, in my experience, only half right—ranchers are.

I've negotiated mineral-rights leases with hundreds of ranchers and farmers. Ranchers rarely consult an attorney, and their word is a sacred bond. Several times I made a deal on the phone with a rancher but hadn't yet sent the paperwork when he received a much better offer on the same lands. Invariably, the rancher has informed the purveyor of the better offer that he was sorry, he already had an agreement.

On the other hand, I've shaken hands with a farmer after reaching an agreement, only to hear upon returning with the completed paperwork that he changed his mind. His Aunt Poo might not like it, or he thinks his cousin in another state might have gotten a better deal. I've met some very honorable farmers, but compared to ranchers their word often doesn't mean spit, and they feel no embarrassment over reneging on an oral contract. This doesn't mean farmers receive better terms than ranchers. As a rule ranchers seem more knowledgeable, are shrewd negotiators, and have confidence in their decisions.

Others who deal with both groups tell me they also see differences. Ranchers consider the paperwork required to consummate sales of large herds only a formality; farmers don't consider a sale of a crop binding until the contracts are signed.

I have mused for years over these differences. Raising crops or rearing livestock would appear to have much in common. Both involve hard outdoor work and seem to offer about the same financial rewards. America's original farmers and ranchers were all homesteaders staking claims on land available to those who would work it.

The only difference I know of: No government programs control the raising, buying, and selling of livestock. Crops, on the other hand, have been subject to massive federal largess/control since the 1930s. Complex programs such as PIK, set-asides, price supports, and the conservation reserve have destroyed many free-market aspects of farming, eroded farmers' self-respect, and thrust them into dependency on government. As a result, farmers seem to have the mentality of peasants, ranchers that of knights.

AS A RESULT OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS, FARMERS SOMETIMES SEEM TO HAVE THE MENTALITY OF PEASANTS, RANCHERS THAT OF KNIGHTS.

Farmers often dwell *ad nauseam* on the shortcomings of their neighbors. Ranchers usually tell funny stories about themselves and their neighbors, or talk about the incredibly nice things other ranchers have done for them over the years. If you bring up a particularly eccentric neighbor, ranchers just laugh and say something like, "Yeah, he's a real piece of work," and go on to relate something good about the guy. Farmers have angst over any decision—the thought that a neighbor might get a nickel more than they did drives them crazy. If you tell a rancher you're going to see his neighbor, he often kids, "I hope you give him a better deal than I got."

I once drove to a ranch about 30 miles from Ekalaka, Montana, a county seat of 300 which is indescribably isolated and depressed. The first 15 miles was a bad dirt road; the last 15 was just two barely visible tracks in the prairie.

The rancher seemed quite surprised to see me drive up, but he and his dogs were friendly. He invited me in and put a bottle of Jack Daniel's on the table. Following his cue, I leaned back in my chair and drank silently for a few minutes. His grammar was impeccable, and he had a frank, open sense of humor. His house was much cleaner than many I've seen but had very little furniture and no phone or electricity. The rancher had a portable radio, a wood stove, two dogs, a couple of horses, and a small herd of Herefords.

I told him I was there to make an offer on the mineral rights under his land. He just changed the subject and talked about his dogs. I asked him how often he got to the city and he said, "In the summertime I make a mail-run to Ekalaka almost every month." He had a neighbor about ten miles away whom he saw once or twice a year.

We talked animatedly for about two hours, but whenever I mentioned the lease he'd change the subject. He had vast knowledge of American history, but only a passing interest in current events.

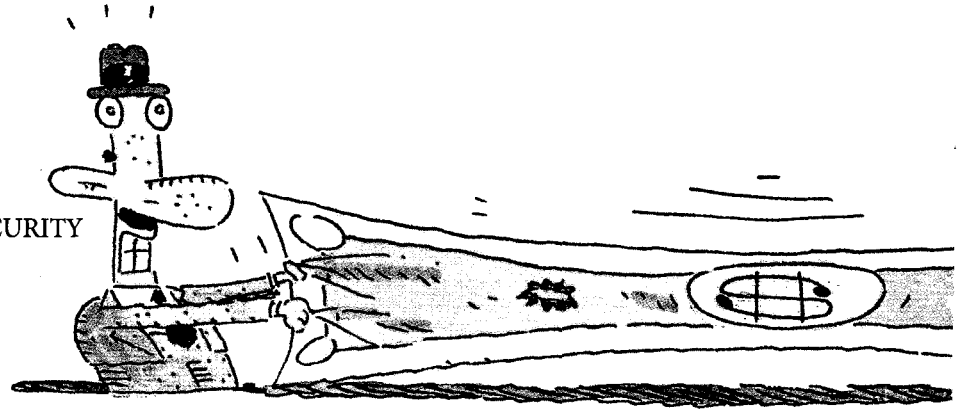
Finally, referring to my lease, he nonchalantly asked, "Would you sign it?" I said I probably would. He reached for the document and signed it. He wrote me a letter for the notary at the bank and said he had to go check on his cattle. As I drove away he was in his corral facing me—he never looked up.

Dale Anema travels the west from his home in Colorado.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's Not Your Money

THERE IS NO "RIGHT" TO SOCIAL SECURITY



"The way you wear your hat. The way you sip your tea. The memory of all that. No, no, they can't take that away from me." Frank Sinatra was right. No one can steal your romantic memories. Too bad Ol' Blue Eyes never sang about Social Security.

Advocates for Social Security defend today's system as an unalienable entitlement. The checks will be in the mail, come hell or high water. Social Security "is fair, because it is there for everyone," states a leaflet from the liberal 2030 Center in Washington. "No matter what, benefits are guaranteed," it purrs.

FDR himself said that Social Security revenues are "held by the government solely for the benefit of the worker in his old age." Roosevelt added: "We put those payroll contributions there so as to give the contributors a legal, moral, and political right to collect their pensions."

This rhetoric is as warm as a fireside. Too bad this notion of guaranteed benefits is all wet. In fact, Americans have *no* property rights to their Social Security contributions. Unlike private pension funds, which actually belong to the worker whose money is invested, Americans have no legal claim on the funds they send Uncle Sam—theoretically for their golden years.

This startling news broke 39 years ago in the case of *Fleming v. Nestor*. Bulgarian immigrant Ephram Nestor, who had been deported from the U.S. for being a Communist, sued after Congress canceled the Social Security payments of deportees. He claimed ownership over his FICA tax payments made between 1936 and 1955. But the Supreme Court ruled they weren't "his" at all.

"To engraft upon the Social Security system a concept of 'accrued property rights' would deprive it of the flexibility and boldness in adjustment to ever-changing conditions which it demands," the Court held. This decision reflected the precedent in *Helvering v. Davis*. In 1937, it ruled that Social Security taxes "are to be paid into the Treasury like any other internal revenue generally, and are not earmarked in any way."

Compare these cases to the property rights that workers with money invested in stocks and bonds enjoy. Corporate pension participants are protected by ERISA, the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act. Those who handle such funds are "under an obligation to manage the money solely for the benefit of the participants in that plan," says Michele Varnhagen, policy director for the Pension Rights Center in Washington. "Once you're vested, the law says you have 'a nonforfeitable right to benefits.'"

The Labor Department, which enforces ERISA, recovers funds from firms that misallocate payments that should go to employee pensions. In 1997, Labor concluded 4,506 such cases and, through voluntary settlements and litigation, returned to employees over $360 million in misdirected pension assets.

Too bad Capitol Hill is an ERISA-free zone. If Congress voted tomorrow to "invest" the 1999 Social Security appropriation in Cruise missiles and food stamps, seniors could only watch in horror. Such a scenario may seem unthinkable today, but what's going to happen once baby boomers begin to retire, and demographic pressures force Washington to make excruciating choices with a depleted Treasury?

Fifteen years from now, the Social Security program will drift into the red as benefit payments start to outrun FICA revenues. By 2030, the Concord Coalition estimates, Social Security and Medicare will consume 58 percent of federal revenues (34 and 24 percent respectively), compared to 34 percent (22 and 12) in 1998. Only 42 cents out of every tax dollar will remain for everything from the Pentagon to Yosemite to the FBI.

As baby boomers retire and life spans rise, Social Security will chew ravenously through the budget. Current trends may force Congress to cut Social Security benefits—in essence depriving seniors of some of the retirement "assets" which they mistakenly believe they own. Some will feel defrauded, but they'll have no right to seek justice in court.

Social Security privatization offers an exit from this morass. Allowing Americans to invest at least some of their FICA taxes in personal retirement accounts will grant them true ownership of their pension assets. Through real returns and compound interest, their investments will offer them far more upon retirement than would today's federal shell game.

In short, America needs a retirement system based on property rights rather than promises. Promises, after all, are soothing, but about as sound as the summer wind.

—Deroy Murdock

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Ultimate Unmade War Movie

In the movie business there exists no "sure thing." But a picture called *The Patriot* that will begin filming in September—starring Mel Gibson—may be as good a bet as exists. Due in theaters in the summer of 2000, it has some of the same markings as Gibson's 1995 Best Picture *Braveheart*.

Even Mel Gibson's poorer movies (like his recent *Payback*) currently sell tickets to the tune of $80 million each. And *The Patriot* isn't likely to be poor. It's set during the American revolution, and tells the story of a pacific family man who recognizes his duty and goes off to war.

The film's screenwriter Robert Rodat, who also penned *Saving Private Ryan*, told me he is excited by the historical setting. Just as Rodat placed the fictional story of Captain John Miller's effort to rescue Private James Ryan against the factual backdrop of D-Day, *The Patriot* is an original tale of Rodat's creation set amidst "the times that try men's souls." It will look at America's first civil war: patriots against Tory loyalists.

"No one's really done it right," said Gibson, after he signed the deal. In fact, Hollywood has only even attempted the Revolutionary War about a dozen times, ranging from 1958's forgettable *Johnny Tremain & the Sons of Liberty*, to the musical comedy *1776* (released in 1972), to 1985's tedious and implausible *Revolution*. Seeing that the job gets done on an epic scale this time will be director Roland Emmerich, the man behind *Independence Day*.

Gibson once described *Braveheart*, which he directed as well as acted in, as "totally uncompromising. The story is uncompromising, and the way I filmed it is uncompromising." Whether *The Patriot* will be cut from the same mold won't be known until next summer. But what is certain is that Mel Gibson is cut from a different mold than most of his Hollywood peers. His background alone is unorthodox: One of ten children, Gibson was born in Peekskill, New York, but moved to Australia when he was 12 because his father, Hutton Gibson, didn't want any of Mel's older brothers in Vietnam. "I heard him say at the time, 'They're not getting any of my kids.'"

Hutton Gibson, though, was certainly not a draft dodger. He is himself a patriot, a veteran of Guadalcanal whose war service earned him the Purple Heart. A one-time brakeman for the New York Central Railroad, Hutton Gibson is also a devout Catholic who went to seminary and is the author of books on canon law and Catholicism. He founded the Alliance for Catholic Tradition, a conservative group that Mel Gibson says his father started because, "Everything he was taught to believe was taken from him in the '60s with this renewal Vatican Council. The whole institution became unrecognizable to him."

Gibson the younger must himself often feel like a stranger in a strange land because of the profession he's selected. This parochial school graduate is a devout Catholic and reportedly a devoted family man (he and his wife just had their seventh child). When once asked by an interviewer why he wasn't "particularly broad-minded" about celibacy and abortion, Gibson answered, unflinchingly: "Those are unquestionable. You don't even argue those points." Gibson believes in heaven—and hell. "Absolutely," he says. "I'm not going to the same place as Hitler. Or Pol Pot."

From some critics, the inevitable question is: How can Mel Gibson, conservative Catholic, make pictures containing sex, violence, and strong language? His answer is that he is simply in the entertainment business and seeking to entertain audiences, not to proselytize. He is not, like many industry liberals, or even some conservatives, an aggressive activist for his own beliefs. One gets the sense that the *Lethal Weapons* and *Paybacks* are merely done to pay Gibson's rent, and keep his 15-employee company, Icon Productions, in full flourish. "It's just horsing around," as he says.

But every few years Gibson does seem to put his heart into some special project which he personally shepherds. These refreshing and occasionally profound undertakings include his 1990 version of *Hamlet*, his 1993 directorial debut *The Man Without a Face* (where he plays a former high school teacher who tutors a young man applying to military school), and of course *Braveheart*.

"It is the tales we tell ourselves that make us who we are," said one of the characters in *Braveheart*. Within months, Mel Gibson and his colleagues will spin the tale of America's birth. Dare one hope that just as *Saving Private Ryan* brought audiences face-to-face with the sacrifices of the World War II generation, this picture might bring a renewed sense of the age when men pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honors for the cause of political freedom?

— John Meroney

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Flashback

TO KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE YOU WERE BORN IS TO REMAIN EVER A CHILD—*Cicero*

Of Poe and Lee and other West Points

There is a rich literary tradition at West Point. As alumnus and novelist Lucian Truscott IV says, "You just spend four years doing nothing but writing and figuring electrical engineering problems. The education at West Point is excellent for a writer—a hell of a lot better than the Iowa writers' school, where they sit around doing a lot of navel-gazing."

The academy's most famous dropout was a chronic class-cutter named Edgar Allan Poe, whose "wayward and capricious temper made him at times utterly oblivious or indifferent to the ordinary routine of roll-calls, drills, and guard duties," a classmate remembered. Poe did not accept hazing with good cheer, as any reader of "The Cask of Amontillado" might guess, and so he was expelled after half a year.

Yet Superintendent Sylvanus Thayer played a role in the cultivation of this proud eccentric's genius. He encouraged Poe to solicit subscriptions of 75 cents from his fellow cadets to pay for publication of his poems. His classmates, who had enjoyed Poe's scabrous and scandalous verse upon stern or detested professors, kicked in, and the poet dedicated the volume to the "United States Corps of Cadets." To the Corps' disgust, however, Poe's printed poetry had nothing whatever to do with them or West Point.

The classic West Point pedant was Dennis Hart Mahan, who taught engineering from 1830-1871. "Most of the men who would lead the major units in the Civil War learned the art of war from Mahan," Stephen Ambrose has written. Mahan was a great pedagogue, if an easy target for sport. He taught "Engineering and the Science of War," although he never saw a moment's combat in his life. He always carried an umbrella. The story is told of the graybeard Mahan asking a cadet—a veteran of the War Between the States—how to perform a particular duty. "No, sir! That is all wrong!" thundered Mahan. The cadet explained, "But, professor, that is just as I have performed that duty practically as a soldier many times during my battle service." To which Mahan responded, "I don't care what you did or what you saw during the Civil War, you stick to the text!"

The cadet oath begins, "I _____, do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and bear true allegiance to the National Government; that I will maintain and defend the sovereignty of the United States, paramount to any and all allegiance, sovereignty, or fealty I may owe to any State or Country whatsoever...."

This vow of loyalty to the nation over the states dates from August 1861, when former Superintendent Robert E. Lee and 295 fellow West Pointers had thrown in with their native South. Agonized Lee, "I have been unable to make up my mind to raise my hand against my native state, my relatives, my children & my home. I have therefore resigned my Commission in the Army & never desire again to draw my sword save in defense of my State." For choosing Virginia over the Union, Robert E. Lee would be separated from today's West Point.

The Academy has always been very much a product of its time. There were no black West Point graduates from 1889-1936; blacks were barred from West Point's intercollegiate teams until the 1950s.

The University of Nebraska Press has recently reissued *The Colored Cadet at West Point: Autobiography of Lieutenant Henry Ossian Flipper, U.S.A.*, a strange book by a remarkable man. Flipper was the fifth black cadet at West Point but the first to graduate, in 1877. He "exhibited the manners of a Southern military aristocrat," according to historian Quintard Taylor, Jr. While Flipper endured his share of slights and maledictions of "damned nigger," in true aristocratic fashion he attributed these discourtesies to white trash: Cadets "uncouth and rough in appearance...much inferior to the average Negro." The officers and gentlemen of West Point, he said, "have never, so far as I can tell, shown any prejudice at all"—an exoneration at odds with press accounts of Flipper's cadetship. (The Republican press of the North made him a celebrity.) But then memory is a funny thing.

Army's hockey and basketball teams play in the Holleder Center, named for Don Holleder (W.P. 1956), a golden boy out of Rochester, New York, who had been pursued by almost every college football powerhouse in the nation. Holleder chose West Point; as a former high school classmate told Rochester newsman Scott Pitoniak, Holleder "was one of those naturals who was good at everything he did. But it was more than just the athletic skills that you noticed. There was a presence about him, a leadership quality. He wanted the onus to be on him."

An All-American wide receiver at West Point as a junior, Holleder was switched to quarterback as a senior by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Coach Red Blaik. He struggled manfully at his new position, and by the season-ending Navy game he had achieved competency. Coach Blaik told the boys the night before The Game: "Three times this season, I took the long walk across muddy fields to congratulate other coaches on their victories. Tomorrow before 100,000 spectators and 50-million television viewers I want you men to know it would be the longest walk of my coaching career if I cross the field to congratulate the Navy coach."

"Colonel," Holleder promised, "you're not taking that walk tomorrow." And he didn't, as the quarterback led his team to a 14-6 victory.

Donald Holleder served beyond his obligation, turning down an offer from the New York Giants to play pro football. Major Holleder was sent to Vietnam with the First Infantry Division. In October 1967, he led an effort to rescue troops who had been ambushed by Viet Cong. A retired general who heard the radio exchange recalled that Holleder "started hollering, 'Hey, there's wounded out here. Let's go get 'em. You get a machete. You, Doc, follow me. We've got to get those guys.' Several people said, 'Don't go. There's snipers.' But he didn't pay any attention to them."

"What an officer," said one witness, a medic. "He went on ahead of us—literally running in the point position."

Don Holleder was killed by machine-gun fire while trying to clear a landing spot for medical helicopters. He left a wife and four daughters.

—Bill Kauffman

Donald Holleder

SMITH continued from page 58

attracting candidates for the later academy program. This step would save additional funds.

The savings at the military academies would be significant. Some of their expensive, specialized academic facilities would not be needed. These spaces could be put to different uses, such as housing graduate programs or serving other post-commissioning needs. Existing athletic facilities would still be needed as part of the integral military training program. A reduced or eliminated need for OCS programs would provide additional savings.

Upon commissioning, all officers would have received the same level of military training. This training, given its duration and intensity, would be superior to that now provided by ROTC or OCS programs, and it would have advantages even over what the service academies now provide since the officer candidates would be immersed solely in military subjects for a substantial, unbroken period, instead of being distracted by having the curriculum spread over four years and intermixed with a competing, very difficult academic program.

For all these benefits, adopting the British system would also carry disadvantages:

• Many alumni of the military academies would argue that we would end up with an inferior product, that the current four-year-immersion program at the academies sets a standard that other officers reach only after years of active duty. (On the other hand, I would argue that by returning superior senior officers to the academies as instructors, and perhaps retaining some of the best graduates each year as junior instructors, a high level of accomplishment could be attained.)

• Some good use would have to be found for the unused academic spaces (laboratories especially) currently existing at the military academies.

• The great history and traditions of the current academies would change. This situation would be unacceptable to many alumni and other members of the public. (But the same transition has already been weathered at the august British institutions of Dartmouth and Sandhurst, without disaster.)

• We now obtain academy students at an early and receptive age when we want to motivate them, influence their values, and imbue them with the military ethos. It may be more difficult to obtain the same results with older students.

• We may need to compete harder to attract talented seniors from good colleges. By the time they are ready to graduate, many of them will have set ideas about heading off to graduate schools or waiting jobs. The available pool of quality candidates might be somewhat diminished.

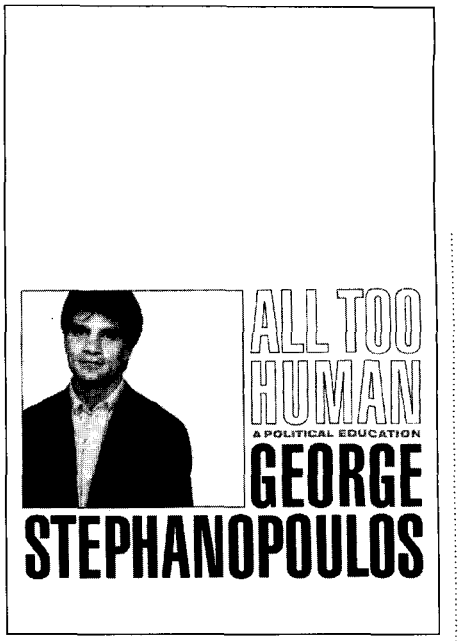
In any assessment of officer education today, a number of salient realities collide: We are spending a very large amount of money at the military academies today to commission each graduate. At the same time, there is now a large supply of college-educated youths from which officer candidates could be drawn. Non-academy programs have already proved they can produce high-quality leaders for our armed forces. We are in a period of reduced defense budgets that is likely to continue. And the need for funds to modernize our current forces is exceptionally high.

With all this in mind, the British model may make sense. It can be done, would save significant amounts of money, and could produce high-quality officers. It's a drastic change, but should be seriously considered.

Colonel David A. Smith, USAF (Retired), is a distinguished graduate of the Naval Academy (1957) and a research fellow at the Logistics Management Institute who has written widely on military training policies.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BookTalk



ALL TOO GEEKY

By Jonah Goldberg

All Too Human
By George Stephanopoulos
Little, Brown, 456 pages, $27.95

When I started *All Too Human*, a certain angst came over me. It was similar to the mild intestinal panic you get when you realize the person sitting next to you on a long plane ride won't shut up. He's got a story to tell, damn it, and tell it he will. But then you realize that the longer it goes on the less you have to hold up your end of the conversation. Your obligation to ask questions, express judgment, even pay attention starts to evaporate like the last bit of scotch in your plastic cup. In fact, your narrator would probably just think any interruption at all is a failure to understand how interesting he is. So recline your chair, don't get too upset, and maybe you can follow along.

At first this is hard to accomplish with George Stephanopoulos's new book. He simply asserts as fact things that would turn heads anywhere, save perhaps at the Democratic National Committee lunch room. For instance, Michael Dukakis lost because he was a victim of low Lee Atwater smears, not, as most post-1988 autopsies revealed, because Dukakis was a liberal techno-nerd peacenik defrosted from an MIT lab where he'd been frozen since 1970.

This book is not about the "issues." It is being marketed as the real view from behind the throne. We do learn some disturbing things about the President, but nothing really new and certainly nothing particularly damaging after Clinton's impeachment examination. Surprise! The president listens to the polls! He is undisciplined! Not only that, but get this: He has a dark side! Zowee!

If only we'd known earlier.

That's not to say that Stephanopoulos doesn't have interesting stories to tell, or that he doesn't tell them well. When Clinton's "draft-dodging" letter, with its hateful statements about the military and its comparison of the war to racism, surfaced in 1992, Stephanopoulos tried to figure out how to hang this albatross on the Republicans. But Hillary's response after reading the letter was an exhilarated, "Bill, this is you! I can hear you saying this." Stephanopoulos was crestfallen: "So much for the dirty trick defense."

Occasionally Stephanopoulos lets snippets of Clinton's character shine through. He writes that "mansion fare" for 20 in Little Rock was "pimento cheese-spread sandwiches on white bread with corn chips on the side." While munching on one of these delicacies George tells the boss that he needs "tighter" answers about the Vietnam thing. The President and his wife erupt into a red-faced fury. "Bill's not going to apologize for being against the Vietnam War!" screams Hillary. Bill says he'd rather lose the race than say the war was right. This anecdote provides an enlightening contrast with Clinton's statements to the *Washington Post* about a year later that he "missed" the Cold War because back then we had "an intellectually coherent thing. The American people knew what the rules were."

But this book is not really about Bill Clinton. Stephanopoulos has written a tell-all about himself. Deep down, Clinton is still a mystery to the author. It is Stephanopoulos who is all too human.

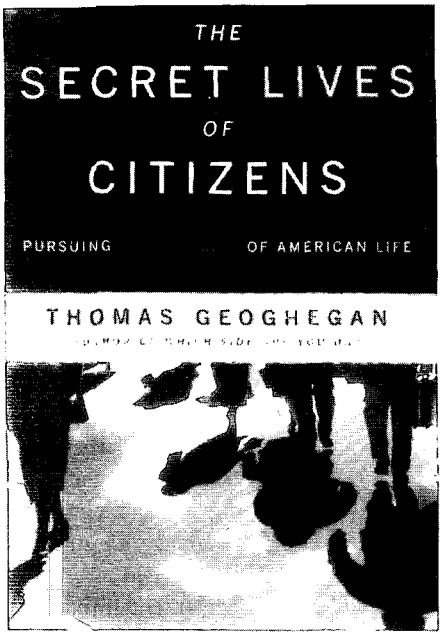
If Clinton is the world in Stephanopoulos's cosmology, are we to be concerned with the orbit of the moon? Is George up? Is he down? Is he in? Is he—don't even think it—out? If he goes back to Little Rock to run the campaign will he lose power? If he doesn't get the office off the Oval Office, will his job change be perceived as a demotion?

George got his first break when an acquaintance of his, an anti-nuclear nut, was shot after threatening to blow up the Washington Monument. George was invited to appear on "Nightline" to defend his friend. "It wasn't my fault Norman got shot," he writes, "but I couldn't escape the fact that his fate was my good fortune." Similar tensions play themselves out in every budget battle, military endeavor, bimbo eruption, and court intrigue described in this book.

Toward the end of *All Too Human*, Stephanopoulos becomes obsessed with the Darth Vader to his Luke Skywalker—the dreaded Dick Morris. To ensure that Clinton is the first Democratic President since Roosevelt to win re-election, Morris makes the President a Republican—betraying everything George stands for. Worse still, George isn't invited to the meetings! So George writes that he entered a pitched and complex battle with his new nemesis. Morris has written that the supposed duel between the two of them was non-existent—Morris' real enemy was Harold Ickes.

By the time Morris comes into the story, George has broken out of his close orbit of the President and seems to be spiraling out of control. He grabs onto Morris to anchor his trajectory and justifies it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



by saying, once again, that he is embracing evil to do good. He starts to take antidepression pills and goes to a therapist. He talks about himself in terms of the Dr. Jekyll vs. Mr. Hyde analogy to explain everything he does to stay close to the President and "do good." But the good he wants to do is amorphous and seems to amount to little more than achieving presidential proximity.

Stephanopoulos's choice of incidents from the Clinton presidency is highly selective and leaves out many of the more famous episodes. Every scandal of import is downplayed as a misunderstanding. Al Gore and Hillary Clinton are treated lightly enough to make sure no reporter in the campaigns of 2000 will begin his questions, "How do you respond to the allegation in George Stephanopoulos's book that you...?"

Stephanopoulos told independent counsels and various congressional committees that he didn't remember all sorts of things. He is far too smart to contradict any of that now. So instead he has written about the one thing he was sure to remember: his feelings. This book is full of cheap grace, self-doubt when it is helpful, and arrogant confidence in his own brilliance when he can get away with it. It reads like the world's longest treatment for an "after-school special." Boy wants to hang out with the cool kids. Hypocrisy and mistakes follow, but deep down we know he's a good kid. And in the end he says goodbye to all that. He is his own man now.

It's still an interesting book, but maybe you should just wait until it's an in-flight movie.

Jonah Goldberg writes for National Review.

EVERYONE IN THE AGORA!

By Charles C. Euchner

The Secret Lives of Citizens
By Thomas Geoghegan
Pantheon Books, 241 pages, $25

From the Christian Right to the marginalized Left, old activists are wondering how to make politics work again. In the aftermath of President Clinton's impeachment trial, conservatives despair about their "loss" in the culture wars—and call for a retreat from the compromising world of politics. Leftist Thomas Geoghegan, meanwhile, despairs about the possibility of ever building New Deal-style coalitions to harness the energy of the federal government.

Geoghegan is a union lawyer, so much of his political activism has been in the courts. But he wants to be more than a man with a brief. When he was getting out of Jimmy Carter's Washington, where he served as a bureaucrat in the Energy Department, Geoghegan decided to move to Chicago because he thought it still had the culture and institutions that support civic life. And he made a go of it—representing union members, working for Harold Washington's campaign, even considering a run for the state legislature. But he found that the possibilities for political activism, even in Chicago, had hollowed out. The reasons are many. Manufacturing moved to the Sunbelt and then overseas. Whites fled to the suburbs. Crime scared the survivors indoors. Bad schools created a skills underclass. Suburbs were fragmented into hundreds of narrow jurisdictions. The feds cut back housing and social programs.

Meanwhile in Washington, minority factions blocked New Deal-style programs. To beat a Senate filibuster, Geoghegan complains, you need 60 votes—meaning that 41 Senators can stop any bill. "The 40 senators from the 20 smallest states represent 10 percent of the population," so "90 percent of the population base as represented in the Senate could vote yes, and the bill would still lose."

Geoghegan wants to see a revival of the New Deal to reverse inequalities of wealth. He even wants to bring back the Humphrey-Hawkins Act, which "guarantees" full employment in government jobs. Geoghegan wants a strapping Madisonian republic, where the feds take charge over the states. He approvingly quotes Herbert Croly's remark that when you let the states run things, only bad things can happen.

The problem with Geoghegan's argument is that he doesn't take care to sort out which policies are fundamentally national, state, and local. No one in American politics since Richard Nixon has seriously tried to allocate major areas of policy to the level of government that best fits the issue's scale, resources, and politics. And except for a few symbolic victories on revenue sharing, Nixon lost his battle.

Geoghegan's problem is that he thinks politics can't be meaningful unless we all gather together in one place and debate things out. Everyone in the agora! Some of our most powerful political memories take place in such settings: The Kennedy-Nixon debates, King's "I Have a Dream" speech, Reagan's challenge to Gorbachev to take down the Berlin Wall.

But political thinkers as various as Thucydides, Cicero, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Madison, Tocqueville, Calhoun, Hayek, and Arendt teach us that political processes come in different sizes and shapes. The key to governing the polity is to have different arenas where people can act on common concerns and contribute to something bigger than themselves. Yes, we have to think about the nation-state. But we also need to be involved in parties, the Internet, city planning, corporate structures, nonprofits, associations, newspapers and radio, schools and universities, sports clubs, churches, and unions.

We have to sort out what issues should be deliberated in which of these arenas. We have to avoid getting sucked into the infinite regress of identity politics. We have to avoid amusing ourselves to death with trivial TV and silly entertainments. We have to make sure that serious contestants find a place in the debates. Then we might have a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chance at a civic life. It's not easy, but it's the challenge of our fragmented age.

Charles C. Euchner's latest book is Extraordinary Politics: How Protest and Dissent Are Changing American Democracy.

THE DUELISTS

By Walter S. Montano

A Fatal Friendship
By Arnold Rogow
Hill & Wang, 286 pages, $27.50

As Washington seethed over the Clinton scandals, it was said that Americans had never before witnessed such heated battles in the political arena. Quite the contrary. Americans today have inherited the intensity and zeal that permeated the political climate of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Arnold Rogow's recent book on the political rivalry between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr provides a poignant reminder of how fierce those earlier battles could be.

A Fatal Friendship follows Hamilton and Burr through a relationship that would end with Hamilton's rise to immortality and Burr's descent into infamy. In July of 1804, at Weehawken, New Jersey, Vice President Burr mortally wounded Hamilton in a foolish duel that stands to this day as one of the most futile tragedies in American history. Rogow has attempted to rescue Burr's name from notoriety—a daunting task.

Rogow's Hamilton is an overly ambitious, arrogant, and unstable fop who is fixated on Aaron Burr's every move. While the vast contributions of Hamilton (notably his co-authorship of the *Federalist Papers* and his tenure as the first Treasury Secretary) are acknowledged, his erring human side is revealed. This is not to say that Aaron Burr is deified. Burr is shown to be flawed, but he is at last given a break from the lashings he has received for the last two centuries.

Why did the duel take place? How could two highly intelligent men who did so much for early America end their prospects over what turned out to be essentially a misunderstanding?

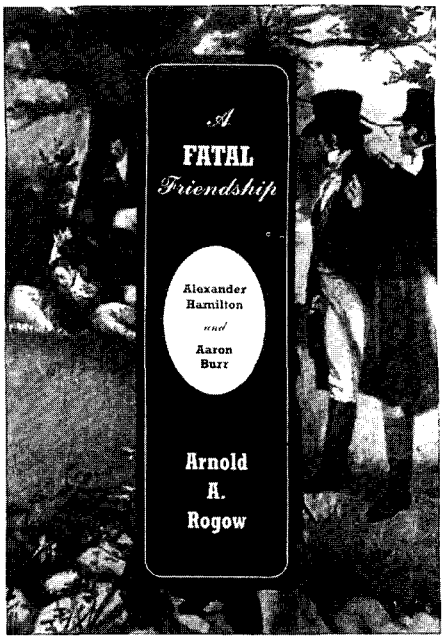
Hamilton involved himself in virtually every significant event of the Founding, including the Revolutionary War, the constitutional conventions, and the creation of the National Bank. He admired Britain and was a founder of the Federalist Party, which stood for a strong central government. Burr, on the other hand, though involved in politics, was ambivalent about important issues. He was a lukewarm Democratic-Republican who often sided with the Federalists. He observed the making of the new republic from afar, detaching himself from the constitutional conventions. He was a French sympathizer who also believed in women's rights.

Hamilton and Burr, however, had much in common. Both were non-religious lawyers who fought in the War for Independence. Both experienced a troubled youth (Hamilton was born illegitimately, Burr was orphaned quite young), yet managed to win high political office. Both found themselves buried by enormous debts from which they never recovered.

As both men rose, a rivalry between them became evident, more so in the mind of Hamilton. Through the use of Hamilton's letters, Rogow displays a man who sabotaged Burr by persuading others that he was a traitor, calling him the "Catiline of America" and an opponent of the Constitution. As far as it is known, Burr never openly criticized Hamilton.

Hamilton possessed a tongue critical of many of the prominent leaders of the time, including Washington, Madison, Jefferson, Monroe, and Adams. Many believed he suffered from a form of paranoia: His fixation on Burr eventually led to a compulsive lambasting of the Vice President. In 1800, they had both competed for the same office, and by winning the vice presidency, Burr ruined his chances of ever befriending Hamilton.

Burr's patience soon expired. He challenged Hamilton to a duel on July 14, 1804. In the days prior to the showdown, according to friends, Hamilton contemplated an apology. Many believed he was so distraught over his political failures that he decided to partake in the duel as a type of suicide. He told friends the morning of the duel that he would not fire his weapon when the time came. The accounts differ over exactly what took



place. But both men did fire their rounds; the result was Hamilton's death.

Burr would live three more decades, with his political life finished. In later years, he was known to have remarked wistfully that he should have "known that the world was wide enough for Hamilton and me."

Walter S. Montano is assistant editor of The American Enterprise.

MAINSPRING OF THE NEW WORLD

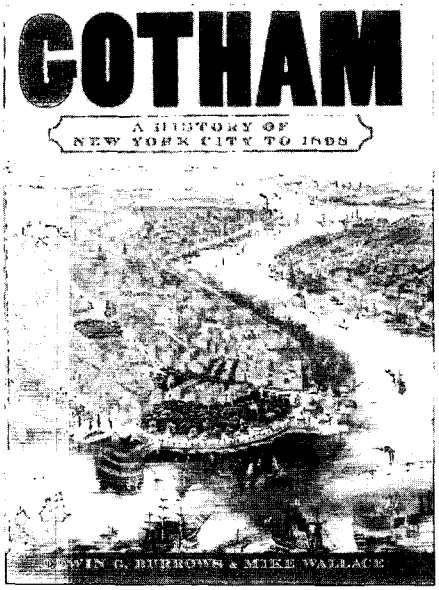
By George J. Marlin

Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898
By Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace
Oxford University Press, 1,383 pages, $49.95

Most New Yorkers have one thing in common—the old ethnic neighborhood. Poles, Jews, Hispanics, Asians, Irish, Italians, and Germans blend with the cosmopolitan environment when working in Manhattan. But when they return at day's end to the neighborhoods of Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Jackson Heights, Flushing, Woodside, Bay Ridge, and Ridgewood, they return to a way of life consistent with their cultural heritage.

As youths in those neighborhoods, we were parochial and protective of a turf that was often nothing more than a piece of concrete sidewalk or stoop. There were

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



stickball, punchball, boxball, and scooters made of wooden milk crates. The most athletic would boast how many sewers they could punch their Spalding rubber ball. (Manhole covers are about 75 feet apart, so a ball that hit two sewers traveled about 150 feet.) Growing up in the neighborhoods also meant being initiated into virtues of family, education, discipline, hard work, and loyalty.

Regrettably, many outsiders can't grasp the significance of the ethnic neighborhood or how its citizenry operates. Many wrongly view it as a breeding ground for racism, narrow-mindedness, and rudeness. They don't understand that neighborhoods are self-contained life centers that promote an environment that protects human values and repulses state domination of human behavior.

In their monumental first volume (20 years in the making) City University of New York professors Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace demonstrate that New York City has been a confederation of ethnic neighborhoods since its founding. Their history confirms G. K. Chesterton's observation during his lecture tour in the 1920's: "New York is a cosmopolitan city, but it is not a city of cosmopolitans. Most of the masses in New York have a nation, whether or not it be the nation to which New York belongs. They are exiles or they are citizens, there is no moment when they are cosmopolitans. But very often the exiles bring with them not only rooted traditions but rooted truths."

From its inception, New York was a city of ethnics that led the way in trading, maritime shipping, municipal and corporate finance, banking, transportation, manufacturing, shipbuilding, the arts, and dining. New York gave us Peter Minuit of the Dutch West India Co., who in 1626 purchased Manhattan for $24 to ensure a safe neighborhood for his company employees; Peter Stuyvesant, who in the 1640s built the first public works and food and financial markets; John Peter Zenger, who founded *The Weekly Journal* (1735) and in the courtroom established the principle of freedom of the press; Alexander Hamilton, who in 1784 chartered the city's first bank and in 1801 created the *New York Evening Post*; John Jacob Astor, the fur trader and real estate developer who by 1789 was the richest man in the nation; Nathaniel Prime, who became the first president of the New York Stock Exchange (1817) and established his city as the center of the nation's finances; Robert Fulton, who introduced America's first steamboat service (1807) in lower Manhattan; and the Delmonico brothers, who in 1830 introduced fine French dining to America at their William Street restaurant.

Burrows and Wallace, with their delightful description of the energy, ingenuity, and creative genius of these and so many others who landed on the piers of the Port of New York, make it easy to understand Walt Whitman's comment that "New York is the great place of the western continent, the heart, the brain, the focus, the main spring, the pinnacle, the extremity, the no more beyond of the new world." Their 1,300-page epic brilliantly describes every aspect of the city.

Particularly fascinating is their treatment of the nineteenth-century influx of immigrants. For example, the Irish came to escape their country's potato famine of 1847-53. They devised the "political machine" that would dominate New York for close to a century, instinctively realizing that the job of local government was to provide services. Ideological agendas never entered the picture; alliances were forged to win power and votes. The system worked because immigrants, trying to get a foothold in their new nation, received aid without losing their sense of dignity. By aiding newcomers in an alien society, the Irish machine unified New York and prevented an underclass from germinating.

I look forward to the second volume from Burrows and Wallace (expected in 2000), in which the authors will treat the darker, more recent side of New York's history—culminating in the political corruption and ideological excess that led to fiscal collapse and the turning of many New York neighborhoods into municipal deserts.

George J. Marlin, former executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, was the 1993 Conservative Party candidate for mayor of New York.

FDR debunked!

The establishment loves FDR, but John T. Flynn's acclaimed classic *The Roosevelt Myth* cuts FDR down to size, telling how he failed to get America out of the Great Depression, how he schemed for big government, lied for "Uncle Joe" Stalin, much more.

Call for a FREE CATALOG

THE ROOSEVELT MYTH
by John T. Flynn
50th Anniversary Edition
HS7864 (paperback) 437p. $14.95* postpaid
HS7865 (hardcover) $24.95* postpaid
*California residents add sales tax

Order toll-free: 1-800-326-0996, Dept. AER1

LAISSEZ FAIRE BOOKS
938 Howard Street, #202 • San Francisco, CA 94103
World's largest selection of books on liberty
Visit our website— http://laissezfaire.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

off The Shelf

A REGULAR REVIEW OF CLASSIC, OVER-LOOKED, NEWLY RELEVANT, OR OTHERWISE DESERVING OLDER BOOKS

THE RAW DEAL

By Justin Raimondo

The Roosevelt Myth
By John T. Flynn, 1948

As historian Ralph Raico points out in his introduction to this recently reissued book, conservative Republicans as well as liberal Democrats have bought into the Franklin Roosevelt myth. The reprinting of John T. Flynn's classic study may help debunk the cult of FDR. Originally published in 1948, and substantially revised in 1956, *The Roosevelt Myth* demolishes the popular image of the far-seeing leader who saved the nation from the Great Depression and guided us through the war years with wisdom and courage. Flynn accomplishes this demolition so throughly, and with a bitterness so poetic, that readers of this volume, whatever their politics, will never see FDR in quite the same way again.

Flynn's thesis is that the New Deal, far from saving us from economic disaster, only completed the catastrophe. Instead of restoring the confidence of the American people in their economic system, FDR "carried on a ceaseless bombardment of it, continued to browbeat it, to denounce it, to warn people against it and to subject it to a dozen crack-brained, semi-revolutionary schemes, including deficit financing, inflation, utopian panaceas and the everlasting preachment that profit was evil, investors parasites and businessmen scoundrels." The economy, already reeling, was knocked flat by this all-out assault, and as Flynn points out "never went back into full production, and by 1938, despite all the [government] spending, faltered again and sank back into a full depression."

The New Deal was a failure, and the President would have paid the political price if not for the advent of war. The amount of public spending available for domestic projects was limited, but Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia opened the spigot of government spending on the machinery of war. As the Germans blitzkrieged their way across Europe, FDR stormed the last redoubts of constitutional government in America. The New Deal set in place all the features of Big Government with which we are all too familiar: an imperial presidency fit for a Napoleon or a Caligula, and an attendant bureaucracy of federal eunuchs permanently ensconced. The aim of the New Deal was to establish the fact that "there is no power forbidden to the government by the Constitution which it cannot successfully seize." This was FDR's great achievement—or crime, depending on who sits in judgement.

Flynn cites Arthur Schlesinger's admission that FDR "had no choice but to trick" the American people "into acting for what he conceived to be their best interests." Flynn's retort has resonance for today: "If Roosevelt had the right to do this, to whom is the right denied? At what point are we to cease to demand that our leaders deal honestly and truthfully with us?"

The war, in Flynn's trenchant phrase, was "a boondoggler's dream," and he tells the fantastic story of bureaucrats run amok in wartime America. Flynn's biting portraits of New Deal bigwigs—such as the Communist sympathizer Henry Wallace; the theosophical Milo Perkins, head of the Bureau of Economic Warfare; and his sidekick, Dr. Maurice Parmalee, author of *Nudism in Modern Life*—are priceless. In describing the culture of Washington at the height of the New Deal, he might have been writing in 1999: "There was actually outside Washington a delightful club—the Washington Outdoor Club—composed of a number of bureaucrats and others which had a lovely sylvan hideaway in an isolated glen where the savants, weary of their fatiguing billions, could toss away their undies and play tennis, volleyball, and leap frog." In describing Perkins, he remarks that "of course he was a vegetarian, abjured alcohol and hated tobacco."

Washington became the world capital of crankery, a perfect Petri dish in which Communists and their allies could proliferate. At a time when the much-maligned Joe McCarthy is undergoing something of a re-evaluation thanks to new evidence gleaned from Soviet archives, it is fascinating to discover that Flynn was exposing Reds in high places years before "Tail Gunner Joe."

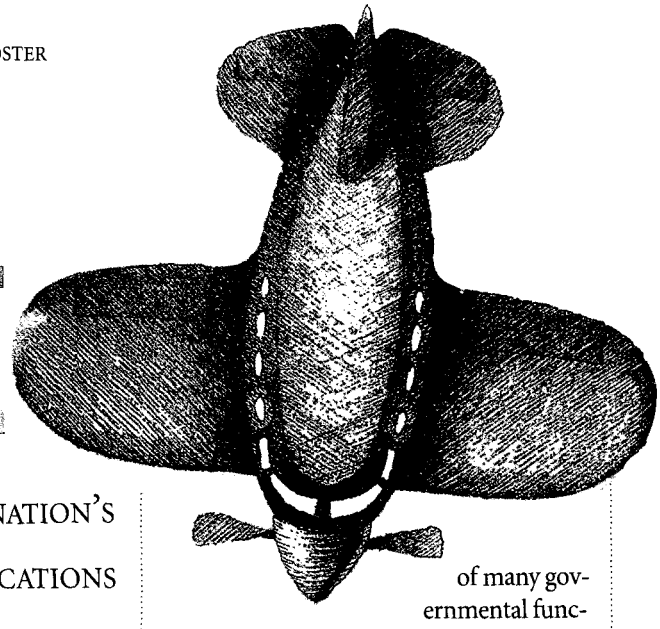
A witty, elegant, and forceful writer, Flynn in his career as a journalist, commentator, and activist spanned two generations. He embodied the collective experience of veteran old liberals whose views had not changed, but who suddenly found themselves, in the age of FDR, branded as right-wing extremists. During the Cold War his views fell out of fashion, but Flynn is at last getting some of the recognition he deserves. In addition to *The Roosevelt Myth*, a collection of his articles called *Forgotten Lessons* is in print. If we are in for a Flynn revival, then perhaps the lessons the Old Right had to teach us will not be forgotten after all.

Justin Raimondo is author of the forthcoming biography An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITED BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

the Digest



SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT NEW RESEARCH FROM THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES, THINK TANKS, AND INVESTIGATIVE PUBLICATIONS

POLITICS

Let 50 Flowers Bloom

Michael S. Greve, Real Federalism: Why It Matters, How It Could Happen, *AEI Press, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

For most of our history, states had a good deal of authority, and the Supreme Court tended to side with the states in state/federal disputes. But in 1937 the Court, under pressure from FDR, ruled that nearly all expansions of federal power were constitutional because they were part of Congress's power to regulate interstate commerce. The result, as Justice Clarence Thomas has recently observed, is that the post-New Deal Court produced decisions that "could be read to reserve to the United States all powers not expressly *prohibited* by the Constitution."

Yet "six decades after federalism fell victim to the nationalist ambitions of the New Deal, it may yet be possible to establish decentralized, competitive political institutions," writes Michael Greve of the Center for Individual Rights.

Three recent Supreme Court decisions in particular give Greve hope. In *U.S. v. Lopez* (1995) the Court struck down a law that made possession of a gun on school property a federal crime, because the law did not plainly involve interstate commerce. *City of Boerne v. Flores* (1997) overturned the Religious Freedom Restoration Act on the grounds that the federal government has no power to compel states to exempt individuals or organizations from laws (in this case, a zoning ordinance) because of religious faith. *Printz v. United States* (1997) overturned the provisions of the Brady Act that gave federal authorities the power to conduct background checks on gun buyers.

These decisions, Greve admits, have so far had no wider effect on restraining government. And because all three were made by 5-4 majorities, the next Supreme Court retirement could cause a shift away from the Court's pro-federalist stance.

But Greve notes that the Court has often been a forerunner of social change. The civil rights movement was relatively weak when the Court outlawed school segregation in the *Brown* decisions (1954-1955). Nor was anti-religious sentiment particularly forceful when the Court outlawed prayer in schools in 1962. Greve suggests the Court's recent decisions might strengthen the "Leave-Us-Alone Movement," composed of home schoolers, gun owners, property-rights advocates, right-to-life supporters, and advocates of term limitation and tax reduction, all of whom want to reduce federal power.

Ultimately, Greve predicts, returning power to the states might defuse some of today's most potent culture wars by offering both sides the opportunity to achieve their goals in some places. Both pro-life and pro-choice advocates, for example, might support a Court ruling allowing various states to establish their own position on abortion.

Freed from Washington's red tape, the states can be flexible, creative, and innovative, which means they can do a better job of many governmental functions than Washington can. "An integrated national economy," Greve concludes, "needs a muscular federal government about as much as an increasingly complex global economy needs a United Nations with teeth."

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Plain Facts About Plane Travel

Robert W. Poole, Jr., and Viggo Butler, Airline Deregulation: The Unfinished Revolution, *Reason Public Policy Institute/Competitive Enterprise Institute, 1001 Connecticut Avenue N.W. #1250, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Consumers have saved tens of billions of dollars annually since airline deregulation was introduced in 1978. But some activists, looking at gridlock at major airports and high prices on some routes, have called for airlines to be reregulated. Reason Foundation president Poole and United Airports chairman Butler believe that technological advances—and more deregulation—will make airplane trips cheaper and more convenient than before.

For instance, small new "regional jets" hold the promise of more pleasant and cheaper flights to small towns. These carry 50-70 passengers, can land on short runways, and cost less to operate on short flights than turboprops. Use of R.J.s can not only expand options in small cities but also relieve crowding at big-city airports.

Government regulations still cause difficulties. The airline deregulation of 1978

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

freed airlines to set their own prices, but left airports and air traffic control systems under government control.

As for overcrowding, the authors suggest giving airports the authority to set fees and determine how many flights may land. With this power, airports could charge higher prices for aircraft landing during congested peak hours—and use the extra money to upgrade their air traffic control networks. Airlines could respond by paying the fees or by diverting flights to less crowded and cheaper airports farther away from big cities. In addition, the "slot" system, which rations flights into New York's LaGuardia and Kennedy, Chicago's O'Hare, and Washington's Reagan National, should be eliminated.

Such reforms, Poole and Butler conclude, would "finish the job of deregulation, removing the remaining non-market elements of the air travel system."

SOCIETY

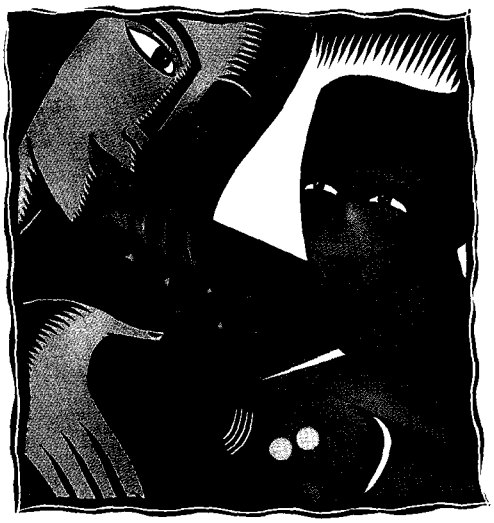
Stop Drugging So Many Children

Mary Eberstadt, "Why Ritalin Rules," in Policy Review *(April-May 1999), Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.*

Many schools today are devoted to four *Rs:* reading, writing, 'rithmetic, and Ritalin. Eberstadt of *Policy Review* is skeptical of the idea that 4 million children should consume the last of those, a drug, every day. Given a choice between cocaine and Ritalin, monkeys prefer Ritalin.

Advocates insist the drug is necessary to prevent what they call "attention-deficit disorder" (ADD). But it's far from clear what ADD is. No conclusive evidence shows children with ADD have brains that differ in any way from other children. Indeed, making an ADD diagnosis is hardly more than a dart throw. One widely-used 100-item questionnaire includes things like left-handedness, frequent job changes, a love of travel, and laughing a lot as indicators of ADD.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has decided ADD is a legally protected disability. The result, Eberstadt charges, is that ADD in the workplace becomes "affirmative action for affluent white people." ADD-diagnosed employees must be provided specially designed furniture and alarm clocks, and receive extra allowances. Schools are similarly affected. In 1996 Whittier Law School lost a suit brought by a student who charged she was discriminated against because she was only given 20 minutes extra to complete an exam, instead of the additional hour her ADD required. The school subsequently banned pop quizzes because ADD sufferers needed extra time to take exams.



Is it right, Eberstadt asks, for children to be transformed by Ritalin into pill-popping junior adults? Is it wise for children to be simultaneously taught that drugs are bad while being "legally drugged with a substance so similar to cocaine that…'it takes a chemist to tell the difference'?"

Putting Cities on a Diet

Witold Rybczynski and Peter D. Linneman, "How to Save Our Shrinking Cities," in The Public Interest *(Spring 1999), 1112 16th Street N.W. #530, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

A number of America's big cities are steadily losing people. New York, Chicago, and Detroit have each lost half a million people since 1970, while Philadelphia has reduced its population by 350,000. Other big cities like Baltimore, Boston, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Memphis, and Washington, D.C., also have fewer people now than in 1970. Urban advocates have tried lots of strategies to bring people back, such as stadiums, convention centers, and enterprise zones. They have failed, argue Rybczynski and Linneman of the University of Pennsylvania. So it's time to shrink the city—and make it work and feel more like a suburb.

Troubled cities, the authors argue, are "vertical." Typically, half the housing stock in these cities was built before 1939, with 30-40 homes per acre. But today's wealthier Americans prefer to live in the "horizontal" suburbs, where an acre contains no more than 5-10 homes.

Rybczynski and Linneman suggest several improvements for big cities. For instance, abandoned land could be bought and turned into parks. Cities could sell 100-acre tracts of land to developers who would then disincorporate from the city into independent, suburb-like developments, like the River Oaks project in Houston and the Highland Park and University Park areas of Dallas. These sales of land can provide income needed for re-engineering the rest of cities.

Environmental regulators can help by being more lenient towards purchasers of long-empty city buildings. Typically, environmentalists demand that abandoned industrial sites be pristinely clean before being put to other uses—a punitive standard that ensures that "massive tracts in urban areas are forever doomed to be economically undeveloped." Better, the authors argue, regulators compromise on clean-up requirements than have abandoned factories rot for generations.

"Our cities," they conclude, "must be radically redesigned to be both better and smaller."

Be Nice to Policemen

Dan M. Kahan and Tracey L. Meares, "The Coming Crisis of Criminal Procedure," Georgetown Law Journal *(June 1998), Georgetown University Law Center, 600 New Jersey Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.*

Inner-city African Americans, increasingly tired of crime, are supporting community policing laws that impose curfews and restrict loitering, panhandling, and public drunkenness. About three-quarters of the nation's 200 biggest cities have curfew laws, most imposed after 1990. But courts, often at the insistence of the ACLU, are striking down

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

these ordinances as unconstitutional. Kahan and Meares of the University of Chicago Law School disagree. Generally, they argue, these laws "reflect a demand within the African-American community for higher levels of law enforcement."

Consider the Chicago Housing Authority's effort to fight crime through unannounced warrantless inspections of public-housing complexes. The housing police were supported by 18 of the 19 elected representatives of the complexes as well as by numerous African-American politicians. The ACLU, however, launched a class-action suit in the name of tenants, claiming condescendingly that the pro-police tenants were "socially deprived" and unable to make decisions about legal issues that affected them. The Illinois Supreme Court agreed and barred the housing authority from further searches.

The ACLU, Kahan and Meares explain, relies on 1960s precedents which struck down similar laws. But those cases typically involved white police rounding up blacks, while today's battles usually involve responsible African Americans seeking to protect themselves against criminals. Many blacks now prefer that police act early to prevent a troubled youth from turning bad, rather than do nothing until the youth becomes a hardened criminal. "The kids the police can't order off the streets today, they realize, are the same ones they'll be taking off to jail tomorrow."

Crime-fighting African Americans have a lot of social science to support their position. Researchers have found, for example, that kids are more likely to join gangs in cities that don't enforce anti-loitering laws.

"A doctrine that listens to the citizens who have the most at stake would be the beginning of both wisdom and legitimacy for a new regime of criminal procedure."

There's No Preschool Imperative

Darcy Ann Olsen, Universal Preschool Is No Golden Ticket: Why Government Should Not Enter the Preschool Business. *Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.*

Most states now fund voluntary prekindergarten programs, and some states are starting to *require* three- and four-year-olds to go to school. Meanwhile the federal government has at least 90 programs funding education for children under age five. The five biggest federal preschool education programs (including Head Start) received $11.5 billion in funding in fiscal 1997.

Yet there's no evidence preschool instruction is a good idea, reports Cato Institute analyst Olsen. Nearly all of the studies on preschool education have examined the effects of instruction on children from low-income households. Advocates then take the findings from disadvantaged children and claim, without evidence, that preschool benefits all children. Actually, much evidence shows that preschoolers learn more from play and from talking to their parents than from the classroom. Yale child psychologist Edward Zigler, an advocate of universal preschool instruction, concedes, "there is a large body of evidence indicating that there is little if anything to be gained by exposing middle-class children to early education."

The major study claiming that preschool provides lasting improvement is the Perry Preschool Project, which studied children from 1962-85. It asserts that poor children in Ypsilanti, Michigan, who had intensive preschool instruction were less likely to commit crimes or go on welfare as they aged. But no other study in the past four decades shows such positive gains. If the Perry Preschool program is so successful, why can't it be duplicated? And even with the intensive instruction, nearly 60 percent of Perry Preschool graduates went on welfare, while a third were arrested and a third dropped out of school.

Nor is there any evidence the nation's largest preschool program, Head Start, has improved student achievement. A 1997 study by the General Accounting Office (GAO) found 600 studies on Head Start. The GAO threw out 578 of them as methodologically flawed and found that none of the 22 acceptable studies showed any long-term gains from Head Start. The most comprehensive Head Start study, performed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1985, found that Head Start had no effect on test scores or student achievement.

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

You Can Be Too Careful

Ronald Bailey, "Precautionary Tale," in Reason *(April 1999), 3415 South Sepulveda Boulevard #400, Los Angeles, California 90034.*

Environmentalists are currently refining a new idea for their arsenal: "the precautionary principle," which states that "precautions" should be taken before any activity occurs that "raises threats of harm to human health or environment." Among the green groups supporting this principle: Physicians for Social Responsibility, Greenpeace, and the Center for Health, Environment, and Justice.

Bailey, *Reason*'s science correspondent, argues that the "precautionary principle" would transform the nostrum "look before you leap" into a "Federal Leaping Commission." Everyone would "not only have to look beforehand in the prescribed manner, you will have to *prove* that if you leap, you won't be hurt, nor will any other living thing be hurt, now and for ever."

Proponents of the Precautionary Principle freely admit it's a way to make government grow. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute scientist Steve Breyman, for example, says the principle "could be an essential element of the transition to sustainability" when accompanied with "green taxes," "deep cuts in military spending," and "industrial ecology and zero emissions." The principle would force inventors and corporations to prove before releasing a new product that it can't harm people. And as George Annas, a Boston University law professor who supports the principle, observes, "whoever has the burden of proof loses."

But it's impossible to prove a new product will never, ever cause any environmental damage. And lots of inventions have uses no one can predict. When the laser was invented in 1960, for example, it was described as "an invention looking for a job." No one, "not even the wisest tribunal of environmentalist seers," could foresee that the laser would be used today to play compact discs, fix nearsightedness, and perform heart surgery. These uses would never have arisen if the Precautionary Principle had been in effect.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If the Precautionary Principle were made into law, Bailey concludes, the primary victims would be poor people around the planet, who would forever be denied the chance to improve their lives through new technology.

Too Much Wilderness?

James H. Patric and Raymond L. Harbin, Whither Wilderness? How Much is Enough? *Heartland Institute, 19 South LaSalle Street #903, Chicago, Illinois 60603.*

The United States still has lots of woodland—about 731 million acres of forests, almost three acres per person—and these forests are growing larger. The U.S. Forest Service reports that 37 percent more trees are planted than harvested.

But despite all these trees, environmentalists are pushing to lock up more and more land as part of the National Wilderness Protection System (NWPS). While about 100 million acres of wilderness are currently federally owned, an additional 123 million acres of federal land, as well as 30 million acres of state-owned land and private property, qualify as wilderness, since they're at least three miles away from a road. Currently on the table are plans to make 6 million acres in New York and New England, 6 million acres in Utah, and millions of acres in Montana and Idaho part of the U.S. wilderness system.

Patric, a retired forester, and Harbin, a lumberer, suggest America may have enough wilderness. "Further additions to the NWPS," they write, "are unlikely to preserve existing ecosystems, are unnecessary for the recreating public, and can be detrimental to the nation's economy."

Most Americans' trips to the outdoors are surprisingly short. (The *average* trip to the Grand Canyon, for example, is 22 minutes.) Few people have the time or accoutrements to take week-long treks into the wild. The Forest Service estimates that only about 1 percent of Americans who go outdoors head to a wilderness, and the average wilderness acre is visited by backpackers four-tenths of a day per year.

But maintaining wilderness is expensive. Patric and Harbin estimate that the government spends about $110 million maintaining current wilderness. But far more costly than direct federal spending is the economic activity that is lost when lands become wilderness. In 1996, for example, President Clinton unilaterally declared 1.7 million acres on Utah's Kaiparowits plateau a national monument—an action that reduces U.S. coal reserves by 62 billion tons, cuts natural gas reserves by 2 to 4 trillion cubic feet, and ensures that 2 or 3 billion barrels of oil will never be extracted. Wilderness expansion has also ensured the demise of scores of logging mills in the Pacific Northwest—and counties and towns are scrambling to replace the lost economic activity.

Polls consistently show support for wilderness. Patric and Harbin suggest a pollster ask this question: "Do you support maintaining 4 percent or more of our country for exclusive recreational use by a tiny minority of elite nature lovers, all at heavy societal expense?"

OTHER COUNTRIES

Should Britain Join NAFTA?

Conrad Black, "Britain's Atlantic Option: And America's Role," in The National Interest *(Spring 1999), 1112 16th Street N.W. #540, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Britain has been hotly debating the extent to which it should join the European Union (E.U.). As chairman of Hellinger International, publisher Black believes that instead Britain should join the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA).

Numerous polls, he says, show that the British support making Europe a free-trade area, but oppose further British integration into the E.U., because they are skeptical of "the economic costs and dangers" of becoming one part of a trans-European superstate. And they are right to be wary. German politician Oskar Lafontaine has said Britain will have to raise taxes and increase social spending if it is to be fully part of Europe. Nor are the British encouraged to hear from the E.U.'s own auditors that the Union annually wastes $5 billion.

Britain's yearly contribution to the E.U. is about $16 billion, with an additional $9.7 billion paid to the E.U. farm subsidy program. Half of those subsidies are then returned to British farmers, but that is a poor return, Black argues. These payments finance bureaucracies in Brussels that generate 320,000 pages of regulations that affect every aspect of British life, including the way fruit is stacked in supermarkets and the times of the year birds may be shot in Scotland.

By contrast, joining NAFTA would provide Britain with the benefits of free trade without the costs of new layers of government, since NAFTA is "based on the Anglo-American free-market model of relatively restrained taxation and social spending." Direct foreign investment between the U.S., Canada, and Britain is

We welcome submissions of reports, articles, or papers you think should be summarized in THE DIGEST. Please send to P.O. Box 8093, Silver Spring, Maryland 20907.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

steadily increasing, yet NAFTA membership does not necessarily result in a loss of national sovereignty. Canada has retained its economic and political independence, even though 40 percent of Canada's GNP comes from trade with the U.S.

Black urges Britain to retain free trade in goods and people with the E.U. But he calls on the British to form closer economic ties with Washington and Ottawa, not with Brussels. "Britain is at the center, politically and culturally, of an Atlantic community, whereas it is in all respects on the periphery of an exclusively or predominantly European order."

Why Scandinavia Must Retreat From Welfare

Xan Smiley, "The Nordic Countries: Happy Family?" in The Economist *(January 22, 1999), 25 St. James's Street, London SW1A 1HG, England.*

Scandinavians have long been known for their enthusiastic support of a cradle-to-grave welfare state, paid for with extremely high taxes. Danes, for example, begin to pay 60 percent income tax rates on incomes above $38,000. But the pro-welfare consensus, reports *Economist* staff writer Smiley, has started to break down: "All the Nordic countries agree that in future they will not be able to go on providing a welfare state as generous as in the past."

Scandinavia's most troubled economy is Sweden. For the past 60 years, Sweden has mostly been ruled by Social Democrats, who are backed by the 60 percent of Swedes who receive either government paychecks or government welfare checks. But support for Swedish socialism has declined so the Social Democrats now govern in coalition with the Greens and former Communists, who want even more government.

Some marginal changes have occurred. Paid sick leave has been cut back from an average of 25 days a year to 11, and some elder-care programs have been privatized. But Sweden's population is aging, and many of Sweden's most productive companies are merging with foreign firms and moving their headquarters abroad. Unless the economy improves, "six or seven years down the road there will either be massive cutbacks or massive increases in taxes," predicts Carl Bildt, leader of the Moderates, an opposition party.

Thanks to North Sea oil, Norway's economy is in better shape. But Norwegian politicians continue to debate what to do when the oil starts to run out in about a decade. The only other major Norwegian enterprises are fishing and shipping, and the Norwegian fleet "is in the doldrums." Punitive restrictions on hiring and firing workers ensure that small businesses are slow to develop. Norwegians have cut back on government health insurance, unemployment payments, and payments for single mothers. But in other areas the welfare state is expanding.

"Rich though the Nordic countries are," Smiley concludes, "they cannot afford to go on lavishing such generosity on their poor, as well as their not-so-poor. They must either trim quite drastically or brace themselves to pay a lot more taxes."

Modern Editions of Classic Works for Readers Today

SELECT WORKS OF EDMUND BURKE
A New Imprint of the Payne Edition
In Three Volumes, and
MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

Compiled and with a foreword and notes, by Francis Canavan

Burke has endured as the permanent manual of political wisdom without which statesmen are as sailors on an uncharted sea.

—Harold Laski

Originally published by Oxford University Press in the 1890s, the famed Payne edition of ***Select Works of Burke*** is universally revered by students of English history and political thought. Volume 1 contains Burke's brilliant defense of the American colonists' complaints of British policy, including "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents" (1770), "Speech on American Taxation" (1774), and "Speech on Conciliation" (1775). Volume 2 consists of Burke's renowned ***Reflections on the Revolution in France***. Volume 3 presents Burke's Four Letters on the Proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France—generally styled ***Letters on a Regicide Peace*** (1795–1796). The ***Letters***, Payne believed, deserve to "rank even before [Burke's] ***Reflections***, and to be called the writer's masterpiece." Faithfully reproduced in each volume are E. J. Payne's notes and introductory essays. Francis Canavan, one of the great Burke scholars of the twentieth century, has added forewords and a biographical note on Payne. In the companion volume, Canavan has collected seven of Burke's major contributions to English political thinking on representation in Parliament, on economics, on the political oppression of the peoples of India and Ireland, and on the enslavement of African blacks and has compiled a select bibliography on Burke.

Volume 1: Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents and **The Two Speeches on America**

Hardcover	$20.00	0-86597-162-5
Paperback	$10.00	0-86597-163-3

Volume 2: Reflections on the Revolution in France

Hardcover	$20.00	0-86597-164-1
Paperback	$10.00	0-86597-165-X

Volume 3: Letters on a Regicide Peace

Editor's foreword, editor's note, introduction by E. J. Payne.

Hardcover	$20.00	0-86597-166-8
Paperback	$10.00	0-86597-167-6

Three-volume set

Hardcover	$55.00	0-86597-253-2
Paperback	$27.00	0-86597-254-0

Miscellaneous Writings

Hardcover	$18.00	0-86597-168-4
Paperback	$ 9.00	0-86597-169-2

(Indiana residents add 5% sales tax)

Call 800-955-8335
Fax 317-579-6060
or write:

Liberty Fund Inc.

We pay shipping on prepaid orders.

8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Suite #300, Dept. S37L, Indianapolis, IN 46250-1684
Explore Liberty Fund's catalogue on the World Wide Web at www.libertyfund.org

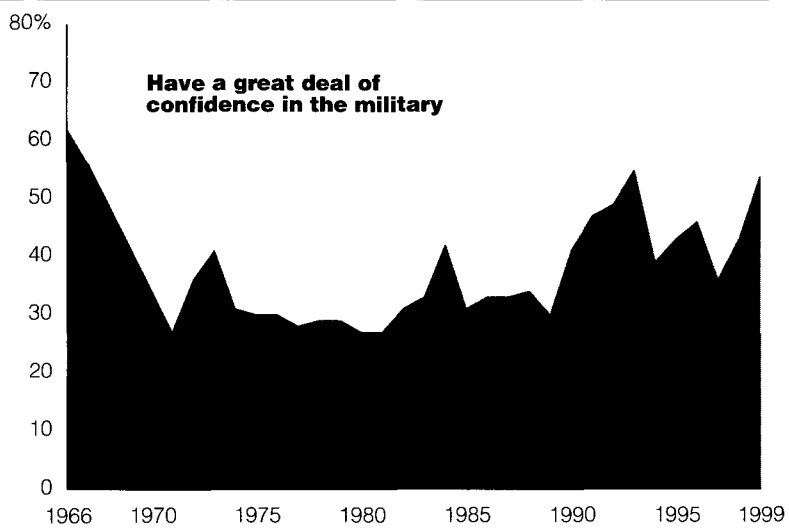
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITED BY KARLYN BOWMAN

VIEWS ABOUT THE MILITARY

The United States military is the most popular institution in American life. Today, 54 percent of those surveyed say they have a great deal of confidence in the people running the military, up substantially from the Vietnam War period and the early 1980s. Sixteen percent in a recent poll were very confident of Bill Clinton as a military leader, and 40 percent were somewhat confident. Twenty-six percent expressed no confidence in him at all in this area.

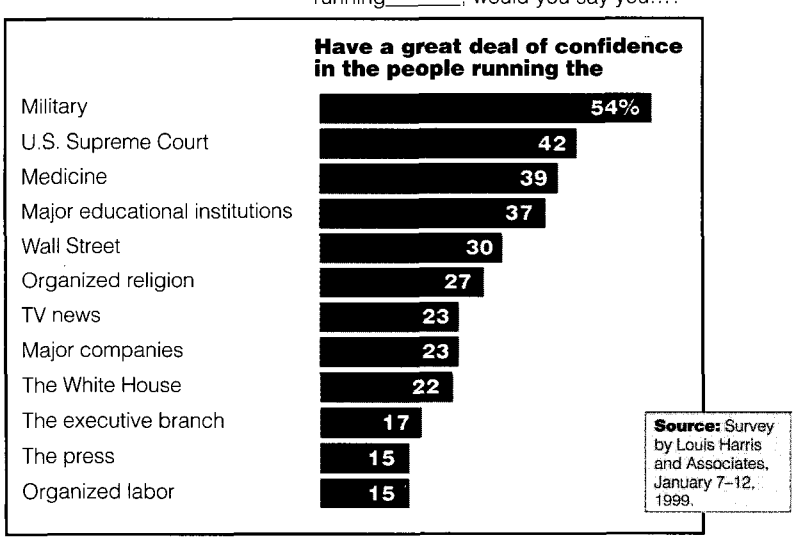
Question: As far as the people in charge of running the military, would you say you...?



	Great deal	Hardly any		Great deal	Hardly any
1966	62%	5%	1989	34%	13%
1967	56	5	1989	30	15
1971	27	20	1990	41	9
1972	36	17	1991	47	11
1973	41	18	1992	49	10
1974	31	21	1993	55	6
1975	30	21	1994	39	12
1976	30	23	1995	43	12
1977	28	17	1996	46	8
1978	29	NA	1997	36	13
1979	29	18	1998	43	9
1980	27	18	1999	54	7
1981	27	17			
1982	31	17			
1983	33	11			
1984	42	9			
1985	31	18			
1986	33	13			
1987	33	15			

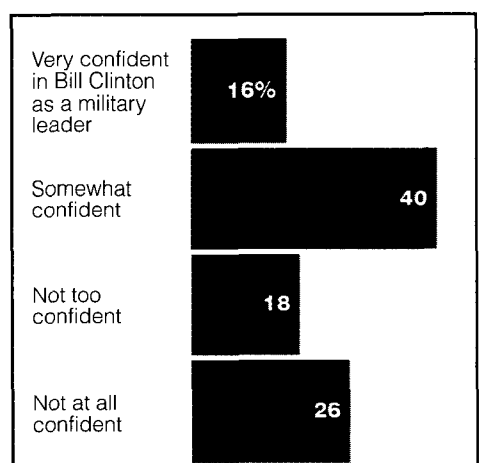
Source: Surveys by Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of January 7–12, 1999.

Question: As far as the people in charge of running_____, would you say you...?



Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, January 7–12, 1999.

Question: How confident are you...



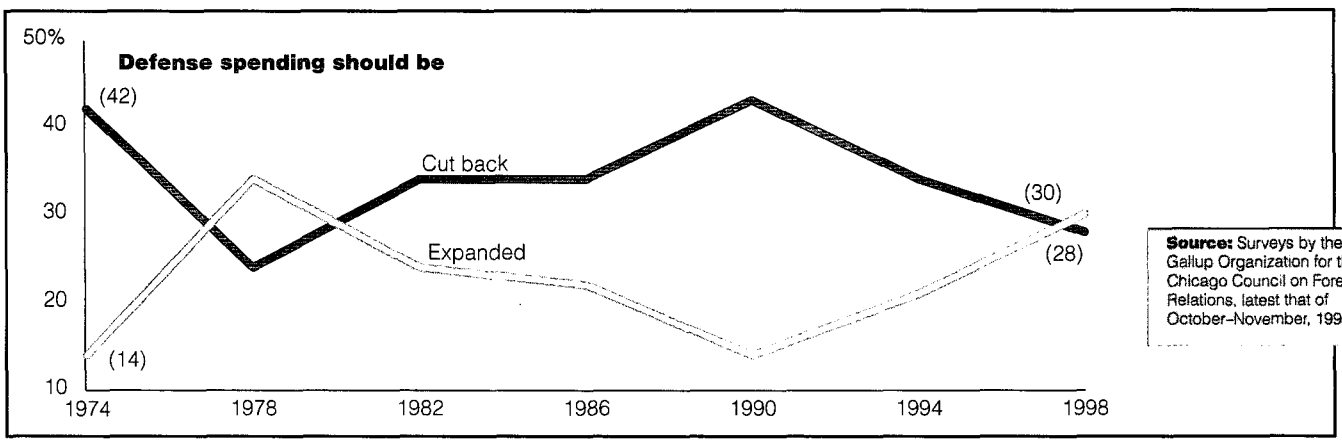
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, April 30–May 2, 1999.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Military Readiness

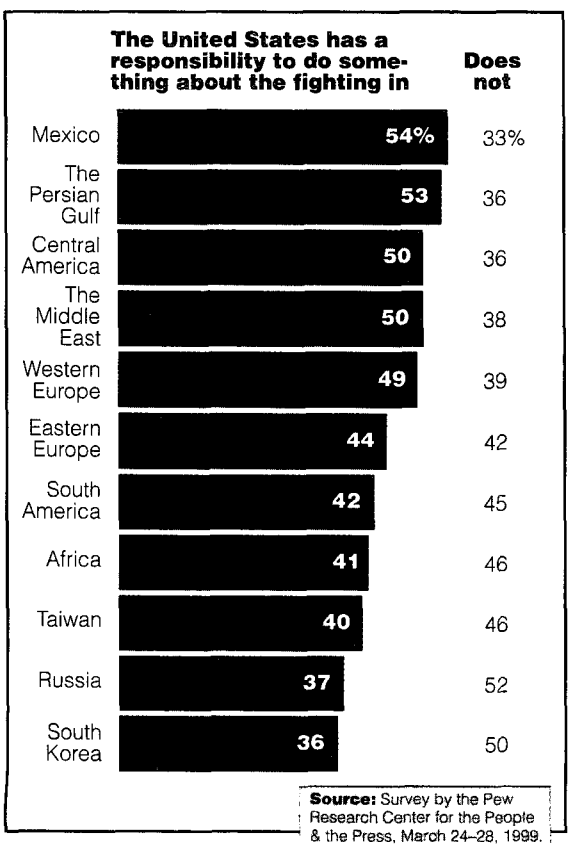
The proportion of Americans who say defense spending should be expanded is higher than at any time since the late 1970s. A bare majority think the military is as strong as it needs to be to ensure our national defense and protect our interests, but almost as many, 45 percent, say it is not as strong as it should be. Belief in the importance of a strong military coexists with a wariness about putting American troops in harm's way.

Question: Now I am going to read a list of present federal government programs. For each one, I'd like you to tell me whether you feel it should be...



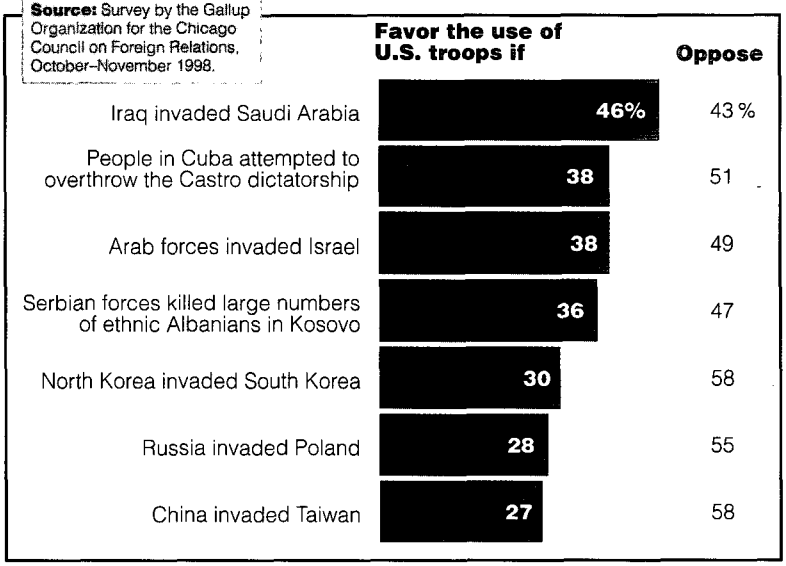
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, latest that of October–November, 1998.

Question: If war breaks out...



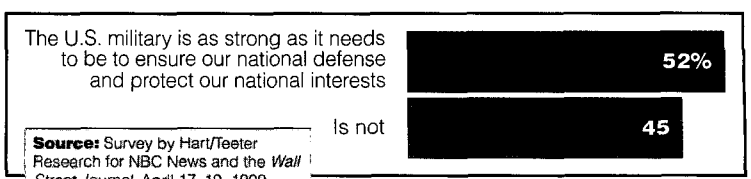
Source: Survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, March 24–28, 1999.

Question: There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. Would you...?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, October–November 1998.

Question: Generally speaking, do you think...



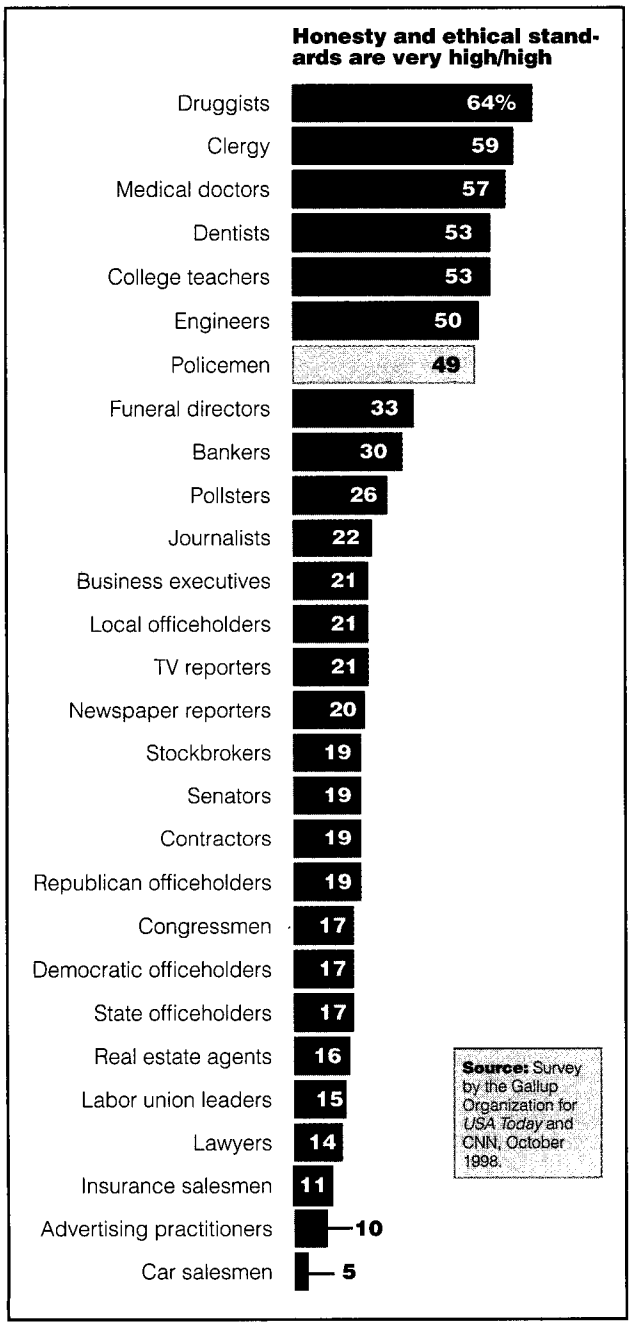
Source: Survey by Hart/Teeter Research for NBC News and the *Wall Street Journal*, April 17–19, 1999.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POLICE

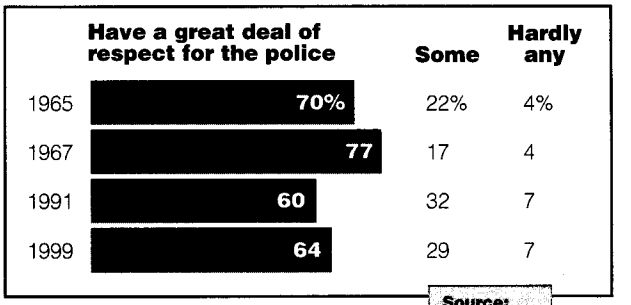
Policemen rank pretty high in terms of their honesty and ethical standards. Only small proportions of the public say they have hardly any respect for the police in their area. Three in ten say the police are doing an excellent job in dealing with crime where they live, and a near majority say they are doing a good job. A quarter of whites, and 43 percent of blacks, say they have been treated unfairly by the police. Eighty percent of Americans say a policeman's badge should not shield him from prosecution for wrongdoing.

Question: Please tell me how you would rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields...?



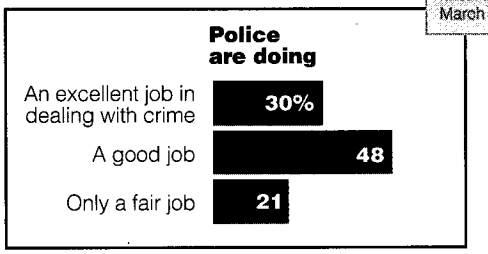
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today* and CNN, October 1998.

Question: How much respect do you have for the police in your area?

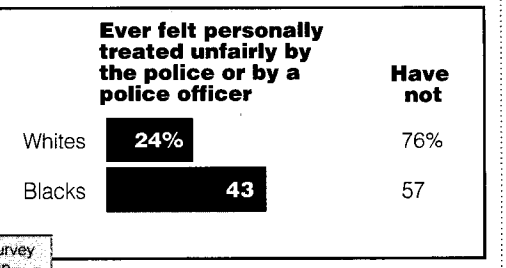


Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, latest that of March 1999.

Question: In general, how would you rate the police in your city?

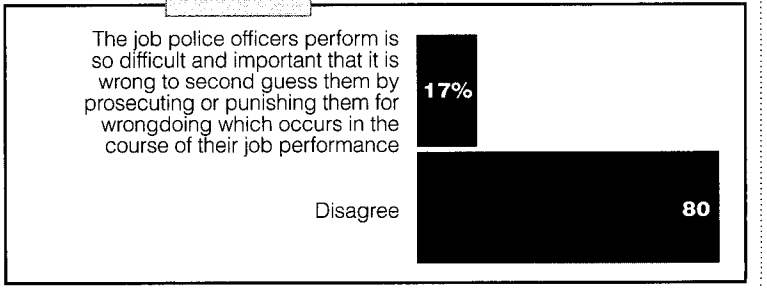


Question: Have you...



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, March 1999.

Question: Some people feel that...

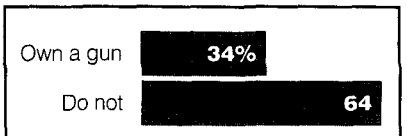


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VIEWS ABOUT GUNS

Around of third of Americans say they own a gun, and two-thirds have fired one. Three in ten say that someone close to them has been shot. Fewer than 5 percent favor no restrictions on owning guns, and, at the other end of the spectrum, 22 percent say all guns should be illegal. Most Americans are somewhere in between. Americans favor restrictions on guns such as waiting periods and background checks for gun purchases at gun shows. Solid majorities in recent years have been opposed to banning citizen possession of handguns.

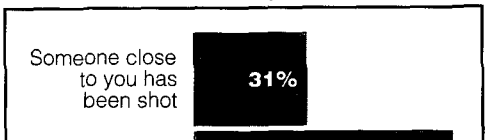
Question: Do you...?



Note: In a February Gallup poll, 10% of those surveyed said they had a gun somewhere else on their property.
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, April 26–27 1999.

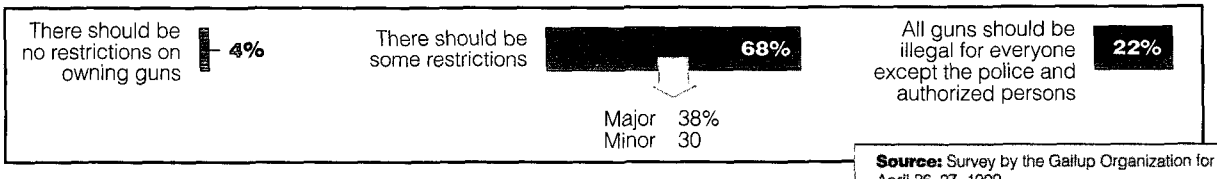
Question: Have you...?

Question: Not including military combat, has anyone close to you...?



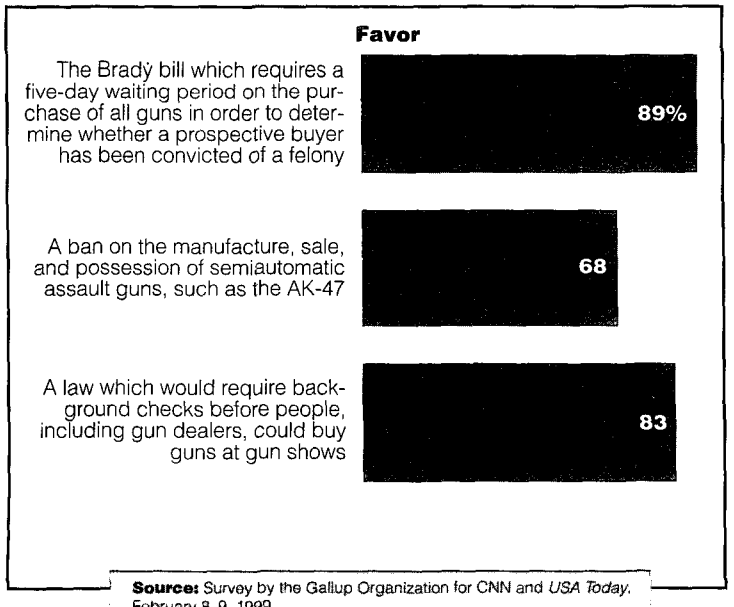
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, March 5–7, 1999.

Question: Which of the following statements comes closest to your view...?



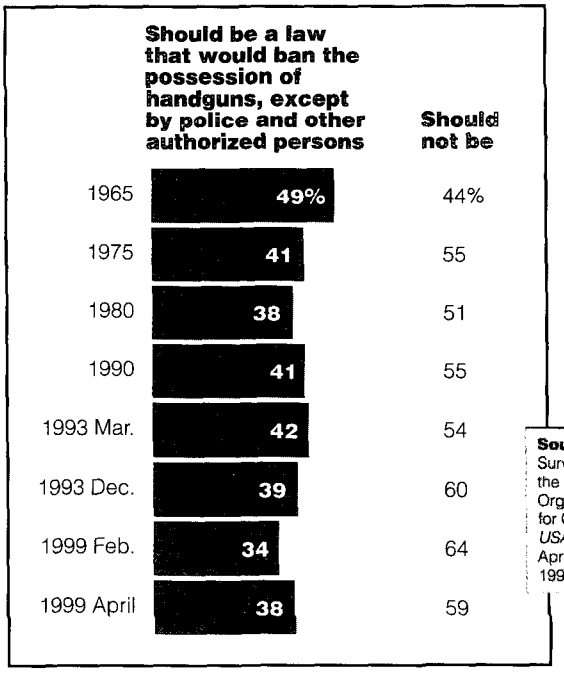
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, April 26–27, 1999.

Question: Please tell me whether you would generally favor _____ to reduce the amount of gun violence



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, February 8–9, 1999

Question: Do you think there...



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for CNN and *USA Today*, April 26–27, 1999.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Mail

A Reagan Republican, I was sympathetic to Social Security "privatization"—until I analyzed it. In his March/April SOCIAL SECURITY WATCH Deroy Murdock criticizes me for opposing privatization, but his argument contains several flaws.

First, Murdock trumpets the 7.6 percent average real return that stocks and bonds have produced over the past 75 years, and he compares this return unfavorably to the estimated 1.3 percent return expected from Social Security in the future. But he fails to note that in the past 75 years, GDP and corporate earnings grew at a real 3.3 percent annual rate, while the Social Security Administration's standard projection for the next 75 years assumes only 1.4 percent growth, which would imply a far poorer performance by equities than Murdock presumes. In addition, for stocks to produce the high returns Murdock predicts, they would have to reach astronomically high price/earnings ratios.

Using an advanced Social Security policy simulation model developed by the Employee Benefit Research Institute, I estimate the highest real return from equities consistent with the Social Security actuaries' economic assumptions is about 4.7 percent. And that's before subtracting for the fees one pays when buying stock, or for stock volatility.

Murdock's figures also assume "flat unisex earnings"—that all men and women earn each year something called the "Average Wage Index," and that they are always employed. Actually, earnings vary by age, sex, marital status, and education. Earnings follow an arc, starting low, peaking around age 40, and dropping thereafter. Men earn more than women. Men have about one in five zero-earnings years, women one in three. A "flat unisex earnings" assumption overstates average earnings for women almost 100 percent; for average households 25 percent. Most earnings and savings also occur fairly late in life, which limits compound returns from private investments. On the other hand, if we correct for all these faulty assumptions, Social Security's returns, relative to a privatized system, rise by about one point.

Murdock also ignores the costs of transition to a new system. Assuming that privatization would be phased in over one lifetime, transition costs will subtract about three percentage points per year from the rate of return for everyone living through the transition.

In short, if the accounting is done honestly, no group now alive can expect to benefit from privatization, under any financial market assumptions. Only people who won't be born for at least 25 years could hope to enjoy the scenario Murdock describes. All but a few current groups would be notably worse off, especially women and most married couples.

Privatizers think they're close to winning, but I think just as the bandwagon hits top speed, the wheels will fall off as these flaws become apparent, further alienating the public from the GOP. If some conservative Republicans oppose this turkey, not all conservatives or all Republicans can be blamed.

John Mueller
Arlington, Virginia

Deroy Murdock replies:

As Ronald Reagan once observed, "facts are stubborn things." One intractable datum is the historical increase in U.S. stock values. Real equity values averaged 7.6 percent annual growth between 1926 and1996. The Great Depression, World War II, Vietnam, Watergate, gasoline lines, and Whitewater could not long postpone the steady advance of America's capital markets. If they could grow despite such serious obstacles, there's no reason to believe they would not rise at an equivalent or faster pace in the twenty-first century.

Even if equity growth were to slow, as John Mueller direly predicts, it would still represent real economic expansion. Any growth in Social Security, on the other hand, results from the political redistribution of income from Capitol Hill. How could a conservative embrace such a socialist formula?

The critical fact is that freeing individuals to invest at least some of their Social Security taxes in stocks and bonds will provide American companies with more capital to produce goods, services, and jobs. Sending money to Washington does not do that.

As for the transition to privatization, allowing young people to repudiate future Social Security benefits and restricting benefits to the affluent (thus slashing the system's long-term unfunded liabilities) should smooth the road from serfdom to freedom.

Conservatives and Republicans should welcome the opportunity to give retirees an option besides breast feeding off Uncle Sam. Helping Americans build their own personal retirement accounts is our chance.

The debate between Leon Kass and me was always, from my point of view, a discussion rather than an argument ("The Ethics of Human Cloning," March/April). In the course of that discussion—especially in light of what he and I have spoken about on one or two occasions—I now think that he is right and that human cloning should be banned until some difficult problems are solved (if in fact they can be solved).

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send to "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax to (202) 862-5867. Or e-mail TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The essential problem is how to select the human whose cell will be cloned. Dr. Kass and I are both opposed to cloning celebrities. I have suggested cloning by two-parent families from a supply of cells anonymously donated to a cell bank (much as sperm is now donated to sperm banks), but this would not really be cloning; that is, whoever bore the child would not know its identity. The child would be a clone of some unknown person, and this would make cloning little different from adoption. This would result in great pressure to clone from a known person and that person would inevitably be selected on the basis of some feature of his or her personality. This would make ordinary cloning little different from celebrity cloning.

Until much more is known about this process, I would prefer that the government maintain a firm ban against human cloning. It is easier, later, to relax a ban than to impose one.

Dr. Kass may not approve of my reasons for changing my views—he has in part a different objection to cloning than do I—but I hope he will realize how much I have learned from our discussions.

James Q. Wilson
Malibu, California

TAE's May/June issue on lying missed a scam perpetrated by the gun prohibitionists. Consider this 1988 comment by anti-gun strategist Josh Sugarman: "The weapons' menacing looks, coupled with the public's confusion over fully automatic machine guns versus semi-automatic assault weapons—anything that looks like a machine gun is assumed to be a machine gun—can only increase the chance of public support for restrictions on these weapons."

Sugarman assumed the public would support a ban on "semi-automatic assault weapons," not because Americans were informed about these guns, but because they were uninformed and likely to remain so. For years TV networks misinformed the public by demonstrating fully automatics while discussing semi-automatics, implying that opponents of the ban wanted to hunt with machine guns.

William Tonso
University of Evansville

Your essayists who blame academe for the increased tolerance of lying appear to make the elementary error of taking correlation for causation. Without excusing the sins of postmodern literary theory, I believe that lying was quite prevalent even before it reached academe and that it was tolerated by your essayists' parents.

Lying has a long and occasionally honorable history, quite apart from relativism. I would assign Sissela Bok's *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* to your essayists for a more sophisticated and honest look at the subject.

Michael Odza
Novato, California

I commend *TAE* for publicizing for Stanley Rothman and Robert Lichter's incisive new book, *Environmental Cancer: A Political Disease?* (INDICATORS, May/June). Quite often, Americans have been willing to embrace the agenda of environmental activists while overlooking many of their exaggerated claims and antagonism toward the free market, private property, and reasonable discussion of policy alternatives. We tend to dismiss these seeming eccentricities as nothing more than the work of fringe groups.

Yet the poll results of a Roper Center study which surveyed the leadership of prominent environmental organizations highlight the incredible disparity that exists between the views of the scientific community and the environmentalists on questions of hard science. Similarly, the views of the general public and those of mainstream environmentalists also diverge sharply on the basic principles of political economy.

These disparities underscore the need for environmental leadership. Only by reaffirming responsible stewardship in our daily lives and offering common sense solutions to genuine environmental problems—without worshipping nature or the coercive power of the state in the process—can the radicalism of the modern environmental movement be rolled back and God's Creation be preserved in all its wonder and splendor for the generations to come. This is truly a conservative task.

Michael B. Barkey
Acton Institute

"An intellectul feast, soup to nuts."
—Joseph Epstein, Former Editor, *The American Scholar*

Leon R. Kass, M.D.

"Splendid. . . . In Leon Kass we have a first-rate philosopher and man of science who reads the Bible and finds in it cosmological truth!"
—Robert P. George, *National Review*

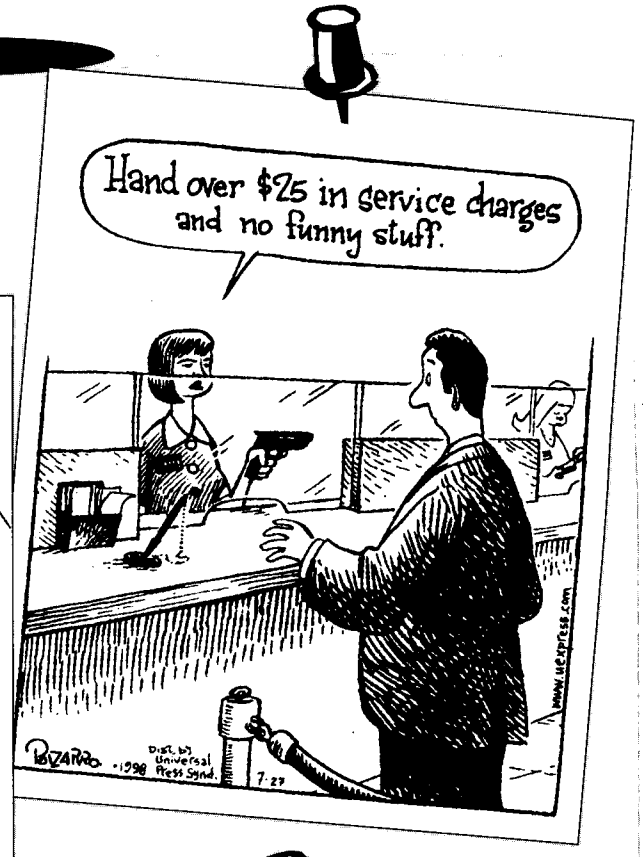
The Hungry Soul
Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature
Paper $15.00

The Hungry Soul is a fascinating exploration of the natural and cultural act of eating. Kass brilliantly relates how the various aspects of this phenomenon, and the customs, rituals, and taboos surrounding it, reveal universal and profound truths about the human animal and its deepest yearnings.

Available at bookstores.

The University of Chicago Press
5801 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637
www.press.uchicago.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BJW Inc.
1150 17th St., NW
Suite 1250
Washington, DC 20036

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

For Foundations + Corporations

Gain Exposure to America's Most Influential Audience on PBS.

Spring, 1999

To: Foundations and corporations

From: Ben Wattenberg

Re: Television opportunities available

Much valuable public policy research proceeds slowly, if at all, into the public debates and discussions that shape decision-making. Some research that does get into the mainstream is silly stuff. Mildly put, this situation diminishes the usefulness of research at a time when we need all the help we can get. Soon, Americans will be voting in an important election. As ever, surveys, sermons, spin and sound bites are at a premium. Even when candidates speak "on the issues" we get smoke.

Our company is deeply involved in trying to improve the transmission belt of public policy research and ideas into the intellectual and political marketplace, through public television. We bring to the public the best scholarship from right, left, center—and unclassifiable. I believe our panelists represent the best thinkers in America. Our programs are lively, interesting, civil, humorous—and provocative. Scholars speak American. No politicians, no journalists, no spinners, no food-fights.

We believe this kind of programming is of particular value to foundations, from every spot on the political spectrum, who often fund research that never sees the light of day. The PBS audience is larger by far than that of the cable channels. And decision-makers watch PBS.

We believe this kind of programming is of particular value to corporations. Decision-makers watch PBS.

Several themes unite all the projects.

1) They cover a wide variety of issues and ideas in the arena of public affairs.
2) While they are separate endeavors, underwriting credits can be arranged to appear on all three programs.
3) They are—typical of most all public broadcasting ventures—underfunded.

Can you help us in these endeavors?

Sincerely,

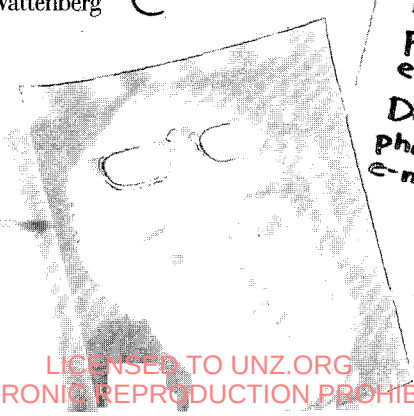
Ben J. Wattenberg

Ben Wattenberg

THINK TANK, a weekly discussion program, has produced more than 200 original programs with more than 300 different panelists. The program airs on stations across the country and on the PBS national satellite service. In Washington, where decision-makers live, it airs three times each week, twice on WETA and on WHHM (the Howard University channel.) A fourth play in is likely later this year.

TRENDS, is an annual prime time PBS documentary special. The 1999 program, airing in November, is "The Stakeholder Society." It explores the explosion in pensions—401-ks, IRAs, Keoghs, Roths, ESOPs, options—which have transformed the nature of being old in America, and transformed America, socially, economically, politically and ideologically.

THE FIRST MEASURED CENTURY, a three-hour documentary program, scheduled to air in 2000, in "core feed" prime time. It is a rich, colorful, visual, fast-moving narrative telling the story of this American century with a focus on data, not anecdote. It's been 100 years since the advent of systematic modern social and economic measurement. But most Americans still learn history as the story of Presidents, politics and personalities. FMC lets us know what happened to people.



BJW INC.
BEN WATTENBERG
phone: 202/862-5908
e-mail: bwattenberg@aei.org
DOUG ANDERSON
phone: 202/862-4882
e-mail: doug.anderson@mrmedia.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED